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THE WRITINGS OF

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

JOURNAL

EDITED BY BRADFORD TORREY

III

SEPTEMBER 16, 1851–APRIL 30, 1852

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ILLUSTRATIONS

SIDESADDLE-FLOWER OR PITCHER-PLANT
Carbon photograph (page 24) Frontispiece

LARGE BOULDER AT NONESUCH POND, *Colored plate*

FROM CONANTUM CLIFF IN SEPTEMBER 16

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JOURNAL

VOLUME III

THE JOURNAL OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

VOLUME III

I

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, 1851 (ÆT. 34)

Sept. 16. Met the selectmen of Sudbury, —— and ——. I trust that towns will remember that they are supposed to be fairly represented by their *select* men. From the specimen which Acton sent, I should judge that the inhabitants of that town were made up of a mixture of quiet, respectable, and even gentlemanly farmer people, well to do in the world, with a rather boisterous, coarse, and a little self-willed class; that the inhabitants of Sudbury are farmers almost exclusively, exceedingly rough and countrified and more illiterate than usual, very tenacious of their rights and dignities and difficult to deal with; that the inhabitants of Lincoln yield sooner than usual to the influence of the rising generation, and are a mixture of rather simple but clever with a well-informed and trustworthy people; that the inhabitants of Bedford are mechanics, who aspire to keep up with the age, with some of the polish of society, mingled with substantial and rather intelligent farmers.

—— of Sudbury thinks the river would be still lower now if it were not for the water in the reservoir pond in Hopkinton running into it.

Sept. 17. Perambulated the Lincoln line.

Was it the small rough sunflower which I saw this morning at the brook near Lee's Bridge?[1]

Saw at James Baker's a buttonwood tree with a swarm of bees now three years in it, but honey and all inaccessible.

John W. Farrar tells of sugar maples behind Miles's in the Corner.

Did I see privet in the swamp at the Bedford stone near Giles's house?

Swamp all dry now; could not wash my hands.

Sept. 18. Perambulated Bedford line.

Sept. 19. Perambulated Carlisle line.

Large-flowered bidens, or beggar-ticks, or bur-marigold, now abundant by riverside. Found the bound-stones on Carlisle by the river all or mostly tipped over by the ice and water, like the pitch pines about Walden Pond. Grapes very abundant along that line. The soapwort gentian now. In an old pasture, now grown up to birches and other trees, followed the cow-paths to the old apple trees.

Mr. Isaiah Green of Carlisle, who lives nearest to the Kibbe Place, can remember when there were three or four houses around him (he is nearly eighty years old

[1] Probably great bidens.

and has always lived there and was born there); now he is quite retired, and the nearest road is scarcely used at all. He spoke of one old field, now grown up, which [we] were going through, as the "hog-pasture," formerly. He found the meadows so dry that it was thought to be a good time to burn out the moss.

Sept. 20. 3 P. M. — To Cliffs *via* Bear Hill.

As I go through the fields, endeavoring to recover my tone and sanity and to perceive things truly and simply again, after having been perambulating the bounds of the town all the week, and dealing with the most commonplace and worldly-minded men, and emphatically *trivial* things, I feel as if I had committed suicide in a sense. I am again forcibly struck with the truth of the fable of Apollo serving King Admetus, its universal applicability. A fatal coarseness is the result of mixing in the trivial affairs of men. Though I have been associating even with the *select* men of this and the surrounding towns, I feel inexpressibly begrimed. My Pegasus has lost his wings; he has turned a reptile and gone on his belly. Such things are compatible only with a cheap and superficial life.

The poet must keep himself unstained and aloof. Let him perambulate the bounds of Imagination's provinces, the realms of faery, and not the insignificant boundaries of towns.[1] The excursions of the imagination are so boundless, the limits of towns are so petty.

I scare up the great bittern in meadow by the Heywood Brook near the ivy. He rises buoyantly as he flies

[1] [Channing, p. 86.]

against the wind, and sweeps south over the willow with outstretched neck, surveying.

The ivy here is reddened. The dogwood, or poison sumach, by Hubbard's meadow is also turned reddish. Here are late buttercups and dwarf tree-primroses still. Methinks there are not many goldenrods this year. The river is remarkably low. There is a rod wide of bare shore beneath the Cliff Hill.

Last week was the warmest perhaps in the year. On Monday of the present week water was frozen in a pail under the pump. Yet to-day I hear the locust sing as in August. This week we have had most glorious autumnal weather, — cool and cloudless, bright days, filled with the fragrance of ripe grapes, preceded by frosty mornings. All tender herbs are flat in gardens and meadows. The cranberries, too, are touched.

To-day it is warmer and hazier, and there is, no doubt, some smoke in the air, from the burning of the turf and moss in low lands, where the smoke, seen at sunset, looks like a rising fog. I fear that the autumnal tints will not be brilliant this season, the frosts have commenced so early. Butter-and-eggs on Fair Haven. The cleared plateau beneath the Cliff, now covered with sprouts, shows red, green, and yellow tints, like a rich rug. I see ducks or teal flying silent, swift, and straight, the wild creatures. White pines on Fair Haven Hill begin to look parti-colored with the falling leaves, but not at a distance.

Sept. 21. *Sunday.* It is remarkably dry weather. The neighbors' wells are failing. The watering-places

for cattle in pastures, though they have been freshly scooped out, are dry. People have to go far for water to drink, and then drink it warm. The river is so low that rocks which are rarely seen show their black heads in mid-channel. I saw one which a year or two ago upset a boat and drowned a girl. You see the nests of the bream on the dry shore. I perceive that many of the leaves of shrub oaks and other bushes have been killed by the severe frosts of last week, before they have got ripe and acquired the tints of autumn, and they now look as [if] a fire had run through them, dry and crispy and brown. So far from the frost painting them, it has withered them. I notice new cabins of the muskrats in solitary swamps. The chestnut trees have suffered severely from the drought; already their leaves look withered.

Moonlight is peculiarly favorable to reflection. It is a cold and dewy light in which the vapors of the day are condensed, and though the air is obscured by darkness, it is more clear. Lunacy must be a cold excitement, not such insanity as a torrid sun on the brain would produce. In Rees's Cyclopedia it is said, "The light of the moon, condensed by the best mirrors, produces no sensible heat upon the thermometer."

I see some cows on the new Wheeler's Meadow, which a man is trying to drive to certain green parts of the meadow next to the river to feed, the hill being dried up, but they seem disinclined and not to like the coarse grass there, though it is green. And now one cow is steering for the edge of the hill, where is some greenness. I suppose that herds are attracted by a distant

greenness, though it may be a mile or more off. I doubt if a man can drive his cows to that part of their pasture where is the best feed for them, so soon as they will find it for themselves. The man tries in vain to drive them to the best part of the meadow. As soon as he is gone, they seek their own parts.

The light of the moon, sufficient though it is for the pensive walker, and not disproportionate to the inner light we have, is very inferior in quantity and intensity to that of the sun.[1] The Cyclopedia says that Dr. Hooke has calculated that "it would require 104,368 full moons to give a light and heat equal to that of the sun at noon," and Dr. Smith says, "The light of the full moon is but equal to a 90,900th part of the common light of the day, when the sun is hidden by a cloud." [2]

But the moon is not to be judged alone by the quantity of light she sends us, but also by her influence on the earth. No thinker can afford to overlook the influence of the moon any more than the astronomer can. "The moon gravitates towards the earth, and the earth reciprocally towards the moon." This statement of the astronomer would be bald and meaningless, if it were not in fact a symbolical expression of the value of all lunar influence on man. Even the astronomer admits that "the notion of the moon's influence on terrestrial things was confirmed by her manifest effect upon the ocean," but is not the poet who walks by night conscious of a tide in his thought which is to be referred to lunar influence, in which the ocean within him over-

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 325; Riv. 399.]

[2] *Vide* next page.

flows its shores and bathes the dry land?[1] Has he not his spring-tides and his neap-tides, the former sometimes combining with the winds of heaven to produce those memorable high tides of the calendar which leave their marks for ages, when all Broad Street is submerged, and incalculable damage is done to the ordinary shipping of the mind?

Burritt in his "Geography of the Heavens" says, "The quantity of light which we derive from the Moon when full, is at least three hundred thousand times less than that of the Sun." This is M. Bouguer's inference as stated by Laplace. Professor Leslie makes it one hundred and fifty thousand times less, older astronomers less still.

Rees says: "It is remarkable, that the moon during the week in which she is full in harvest, rises sooner after sun-setting than she does in any other full moon week in the year. By doing so she affords an immediate supply of light after sunset, which is very beneficial to the farmers for reaping and gathering in the fruits of the earth; and therefore they distinguish this full moon from all the others in the year, by calling it the harvest moon." Howitt places the Harvest Moon in August.

The retirement in which Green has lived for nearly eighty years in Carlisle is a retirement very different from and much greater than that in which the pioneer dwells at the West; for the latter dwells within sound of the surf of those billows of migration which are breaking on the shores around him, or near him, of the West, but those billows have long since swept over the spot

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 325; Riv. 399, 400.]

which Green inhabits, and left him in the calm sea. There is somewhat exceedingly pathetic to think of in such a life as he must have lived, — with no more to redeem it, — such a life as an average Carlisle man may be supposed to live drawn out to eighty years. And he has died, perchance, and there is nothing but the mark of his cider-mill left. Here was the cider-mill, and there the orchard, and there the hog-pasture; and so men lived, and ate, and drank, and passed away, — like vermin. Their long life was mere duration. As respectable is the life of the woodchucks, which perpetuate their race in the orchard still. That is the life of these *selectmen* (!) spun out. They will be forgotten in a few years, even by such as themselves, like vermin. They will be known only like Kibbe, who is said to have been a large man who weighed two hundred and fifty, who had five or six heavy daughters who rode to Concord meeting-house on horseback, taking turns, — they were so heavy that only one could ride at once. What, then, would redeem such a life? We only know that they ate, and drank, and built barns, and died and were buried, and still, perchance, their tombstones cumber the ground.[1] But if I could know that there was ever entertained over their cellar-hole some divine thought, which came as a messenger of the gods, that he who resided here acted once in his life from a noble impulse, rising superior to his grovelling and penurious life, if only a single verse of poetry or of poetic prose had ever been written or spoken or conceived here beyond a doubt, I should not think it in vain that man had lived here. It would to

[1] [Channing, pp. 176, 177.]

some extent be true then that God had lived here. That all his life he lived only as a farmer — as the most valuable stock only on a farm — and in no moments as a man!

Sept. 22. To the Three Friends' Hill over Bear Hill.

Yesterday and to-day the stronger winds of autumn have begun to blow, and the telegraph harp has sounded loudly. I heard it especially in the Deep Cut this afternoon, the tone varying with the tension of different parts of the wire. The sound proceeds from near the posts, where the vibration is apparently more rapid. I put my ear to one of the posts, and it seemed to me as if every pore of the wood was filled with music, labored with the strain, — as if every fibre was affected and being seasoned or timed, rearranged according to a new and more harmonious law. Every swell and change or inflection of tone pervaded and seemed to proceed from the wood, the divine tree or wood, as if its very substance was transmuted. What a recipe for preserving wood, perchance, — to keep it from rotting, — to fill its pores with music! How this wild tree from the forest, stripped of its bark and set up here, rejoices to transmit this music! When no music proceeds from the wire, on applying my ear I hear the hum within the entrails of the wood, — the oracular tree acquiring, accumulating, the prophetic fury.

The resounding wood! how much the ancients would have made of it! To have a harp on so great a scale, girdling the very earth, and played on by the winds of

every latitude and longitude, and that harp were, as it were, the manifest blessing of heaven on a work of man's! Shall we not add a tenth Muse to the immortal Nine? And that the invention thus divinely honored and distinguished — on which the Muse has condescended to smile — is this magic medium of communication for mankind!

To read that the ancients stretched a wire round the earth, attaching it to the trees of the forest, by which they sent messages by one named Electricity, father of Lightning and Magnetism, swifter far than Mercury, the stern commands of war and news of peace, and that the winds caused this wire to vibrate so that it emitted a harp-like and æolian music in all the lands through which it passed, as if to express the satisfaction of the gods in this invention. Yet this is fact, and we have yet attributed the invention to no god.[1]

I am astonished to see how brown and sere the groundsel or "fire-weed" on hillside by Heywood's Meadow, which has been touched by frost, already is, — as if it had died long months ago, or a fire had run through it. It is a very tender plant.

Standing on Bear Hill in Lincoln. The black birches (I think they are), now yellow, on the south side of Flint's Pond, on the hillside, look like flames. The chestnut trees are brownish-yellow as well as green. It is a beautifully clear and bracing air, with just enough coolness, full of the memory of frosty mornings, through which all things are distinctly seen and the fields look as smooth as velvet. The fragrance of grapes is on the

[1] [Channing, pp. 201, 202.]

breeze and the red drooping barberries sparkle amid the leaves. From the hill on the south side of the pond, the forests have a singularly rounded and bowery look, clothing the hills quite down to the water's edge and leaving no shore; the ponds are like drops of dew amid and partly covering the leaves. So the great globe is luxuriously crowded without margin.

The *Utricularia cornuta*, or horned utricularia, on the sandy pond-shore, not affected by the frost.

Sept. 23. Notwithstanding the fog, the fences this morning are covered with so thick a frost that you can write your name anywhere with your nail.

The partridge and the rabbit, — they still are sure to thrive like true natives of the soil, whatever revolutions occur. If the forest is cut off, many bushes spring up which afford them concealment, and they become more numerous than ever.

The sumach are among the reddest leaves at present. The telegraph harp sounds strongly to-day, in the midst of the rain. I put my ear to the trees and I hear it working terribly within, and anon it swells into a clear tone, which seems to concentrate in the core of the tree, for all the sound seems to proceed from the wood. It is as if you had entered some world-famous cathedral, resounding to some vast organ. The fibres of all things have their tension, and are strained like the strings of a lyre. I feel the very ground tremble under my feet as I stand near the post. This wire vibrates with great power, as if it would strain and rend the wood. What an awful and fateful music it must be to the worms in

the wood! No better vermifuge were needed.[1] No danger that worms will attack this wood; such vibrating music would thrill them to death. I scare up large flocks of sparrows in the garden.

Sept. 24. Returning over the causeway from Flint's Pond the other evening (22d), just at sunset, I observed that while the west was of a bright golden color under a bank of clouds, — the sun just setting, — and not a tinge of red was yet visible there, there was a distinct purple tinge in the nearer atmosphere, so that Annursnack Hill, seen through it, had an exceedingly rich empurpled look. It is rare that we perceive this purple tint in the air, telling of the juice of the wild grape and poke-berries. The empurpled hills! Methinks I have only noticed this in cooler weather.

Last night was exceedingly dark. I could not see the sidewalk in the street, but only felt it with my feet. I was obliged to whistle to warn travellers of my nearness, and then I would suddenly find myself abreast of them without having seen anything or heard their footsteps. It was cloudy and rainy weather combined with the absence of the moon. So dark a night that, if a farmer who had come in a-shopping had spent but an hour after sunset in some shop, he might find himself a prisoner in the village for the night. Thick darkness.

8 A. M. — To Lee's Bridge *via* Conantum.

It is a cool and windy morning, and I have donned a thick coat for a walk. The wind is from the north, so that the telegraph harp does not sound where I cross.

[1] [Channing, p. 202.]

This windy autumnal weather is very exciting and bracing, clear and cold, after the rain of yesterday, it having cleared off in the night. I see a small hawk, a pigeon (?) hawk, over the Depot Field, which can hardly fly against the wind. At Hubbard's Grove the wind roars loudly in the woods. Grapes are ripe and already shrivelled by frost; barberries also. It is cattle-show day at Lowell.

Yesterday's wind and rain has strewn the ground with leaves, especially under the apple trees. Rain coming after frost seems to loosen the hold of the leaves, making them rot off. Saw a woodchuck disappearing in his hole. The river washes up-stream before the wind, with white streaks of foam on its dark surface, diagonally to its course, showing the direction of the wind. Its surface, reflecting the sun, is dazzlingly bright. The outlines of the hills are remarkably distinct and firm, and their surfaces bare and hard, not clothed with a thick air. I notice one red tree, a red maple, against the green woodside in Conant's meadow. It is a far brighter red than the blossoms of any tree in summer and more conspicuous. The huckleberry bushes on Conantum are all turned red.

What can be handsomer for a picture than our river scenery now? Take this view from the first Conantum Cliff. First this smoothly shorn meadow on the west side of the stream, with all the swaths distinct, sprinkled with apple trees casting heavy shadows black as ink, such as can be seen only in this clear air, this strong light, one cow wandering restlessly about in it and lowing; then the blue river, scarcely darker than

and not to be distinguished from the sky, its waves driven southward, or up-stream, by the wind, making it appear to flow that way, bordered by willows and button-bushes; then the narrow meadow beyond, with varied lights and shades from its waving grass, which for some reason has not been cut this year, though so dry, now at length each grass-blade bending south before the wintry blast, as if bending for aid in that direction; then the hill rising sixty feet to a terrace-like plain covered with shrub oaks, maples, etc., now variously tinted, clad all in a livery of gay colors, every bush a feather in its cap; and further in the rear the wood-crowned Cliff some two hundred feet high, where gray rocks here and there project from amidst the bushes, with its orchard on the slope; and to the right of the Cliff the distant Lincoln hills in the horizon. The landscape so handsomely colored, the air so clear and wholesome; and the surface of the earth is so pleasingly varied, that it seems rarely fitted for the abode of man.

In Cohush Swamp the sumach leaves have turned a very deep red, but have not lost their fragrance. I notice wild apples growing luxuriantly in the midst of the swamp, rising red over the colored, painted leaves of the sumach, and reminding me that they were ripened and colored by the same influences, — some green, some yellow, some red, like the leaves.

Fell in with a man whose breath smelled of spirit which he had drunk. How could I but feel that it was his own spirit that I smelt? [1] Behind Miles's, Darius Miles's, that was, I asked an Irishman how many po-

[1] [Channing, p. 217.]

tatoes he could dig in a day, wishing to know how well they yielded. "Well, I don't keep any account," he answered; "I scratch away, and let the day's work praise itself." Aye, there's the difference between the Irishman and the Yankee; the Yankee keeps an account. The simple honesty of the Irish pleases me. A sparrow hawk, hardly so big as a nighthawk, flew over high above my head, — a pretty little graceful fellow, too small and delicate to be rapacious.

Found a grove of young sugar maples (*Acer saccharinum*) behind what was Miles's. How silently and yet startlingly the existence of these sugar maples was revealed to me, — which I had not thought grew in my immediate neighborhood, — when first I perceived the entire edges of its leaves and their obtuse sinuses.

Such near hills as Nobscot and Nashoba have lost all their azure in this clear air and plainly belong to earth. Give me clearness nevertheless, though my heavens be moved further off to pay for it.

I perceive from the hill behind Lee's that much of the river meadows is not cut, though they have been very dry. The sun-sparkle on the river is dazzlingly bright in this atmosphere, as it has not been, perchance, for many a month. It is so cold I am glad to sit behind the wall. Still the great bidens blooms by the causeway-side beyond the bridge.[1]

At Clematis Brook I perceive that the pods or follicles of the *Asclepias Syriaca* now point upward. Did they before all point down? Have they turned up? They are already bursting. I release some seeds with

[1] [Channing, pp. 217, 218.]

the long, fine silk attached. The fine threads fly apart at once, open with a spring, and then ray themselves out into a hemispherical form, each thread freeing itself from its neighbor and all reflecting prismatic or rainbow tints. The seeds, besides, are furnished with wings, which plainly keep them steady and prevent their whirling round. I let one go, and it rises slowly and uncertainly at first, now driven this way, then that, by currents which I cannot perceive, and I fear it will make shipwreck against the neighboring wood; but no, as it approaches it, it surely rises above it, and then, feeling the strong north wind, it is borne off rapidly in the opposite direction, ever rising higher and higher and tossing and heaved about with every fluctuation of the air, till, at a hundred feet above the earth and fifty rods off, steering south, I lose sight of it. How many myriads go sailing away at this season, high over hill and meadow and river, on various tacks until the wind lulls, to plant their race in new localities, who can tell how many miles distant! And for this end these silken streamers have been perfecting all summer, snugly packed in this light chest, — a perfect adaptation to this end, a prophecy not only of the fall but of future springs. Who could believe in prophecies of Daniel or of Miller that the world would end this summer, while one milkweed with faith matured its seeds ?[1]

On Mt. Misery some very rich yellow leaves — clear yellow — of the *Populus grandidentata*, which still love to wag, and tremble in my hands. Also canoe birches there.

[1] [Channing, pp. 204, 205.]

The river and pond from the side of the sun look comparatively dark. As I look over the country westward and northwestward, the prospect looks already bleak and wintry. The surface of the earth between the forests is no longer green, but russet and hoary. You see distinctly eight or ten miles the russet earth and even houses, and then its outline is distinctly traced against the further blue mountains, thirty or thirty-five miles distant. You see distinctly perhaps to the height of land between the Nashua and Concord, and then the convexity of the earth conceals the further hills, though high, and your vision leaps a broad valley at once to the mountains.

Get home at noon.

At sundown the wind has all gone down.

Sept. 25. I was struck by the fitness of the expression chosen by the Irishman yesterday, — "I let the day's work praise itself." It was more pertinent than a scholar could have selected. But the Irishman does not trouble himself to inquire if the day's work has not reason to blame itself.

Some men are excited by the smell of burning powder, but I thought in my dream last night how much saner to be excited by the smell of new bread.

I did not see but the seeds of the milkweed would be borne many hundred miles, and those which were ripened in New England might plant themselves in Pennsylvania. Densely packed in a little oblong chest armed with soft downy prickles and lined with a smooth silky lining, lie some one or two hundreds such pear-

shaped seeds (or like a steelyards poise), which have derived their nutriment through a band of extremely fine silken threads attached by their extremities to the core. At length, when the seeds are matured and cease to require nourishment from the parent plant, being weaned, and the pod with dryness and frost bursts, the extremities of the silken threads detach themselves from the core, and from being the conduits of nutriment to the seed become the buoyant balloon which, like some spiders' webs, bear the seeds to new and distant fields. They merely serve to buoy up the full-fed seed. Far finer than the finest thread. Think of the great variety of balloons which at this season are buoyed up by similar means! I am interested in the fate or success of every such venture which the autumn sends forth.[1]

I am astonished to find how much travellers, both in the East and West, permit themselves to be imposed on by a name, — that the traveller in the East, for instance, presumes so great a difference between one Asiatic and another because one bears the title of a Christian and the other not. At length he comes to a sect of Christians, — Armenians or Nestorians, — and predicates of them a far greater civilization, civility, and humanity than of their neighbors, I suspect not with much truth. At that distance and so impartially viewed, I see but little difference between a Christian and a Mahometan; and so I perceive that European and American Christians, so called, are precisely like these heathenish Armenian and Nestorian Christians,

[1] [Channing, p. 205.]

— not Christians, of course, in any true sense, but one other heathenish sect in the West, the difference between whose religion and that of the Mahometans is very slight and unimportant. Just such, not Christians but, as it were, heathenish Nestorian Christians, are we Americans. As if a Christian's dog were something better than a Mahometan's! I perceive no triumphant superiority in the so-called Christian over the so-called Mahometan. That nation is not Christian where the principles of humanity do not prevail, but the prejudices of race. I expect the Christian not to be superstitious, but to be distinguished by the clearness of his knowledge, the strength of his faith, the breadth of his humanity. A man of another race, an African for instance, comes to America to travel through it, and he meets with treatment exactly similar to, or worse than, that which the American meets with among the Turks, and Arabs, and Tartars. He is kicked out of the cars and hotels, or only admitted to the poorest place in them. The traveller, in both cases, finds the religion to be a mere superstition and frenzy, or rabidness.

The season of flowers may be considered as past now that the frosts have come. Fires have become comfortable. The evenings are pretty long.

2 P. M. — To bathe in Hubbard's meadow, thence to Cliffs.

It is beautiful weather, the air wonderfully clear and all objects bright and distinct. The air is of crystal purity. Both air and water are so transparent that the fisherman tries in vain to deceive the fish with his baits. Even our commonly muddy river looks clear to-day.

I find the water suddenly cold, and that the bathing days are over.

I see numerous butterflies still, yellow and small red, though not in fleets. Examined the hornets' nest near Hubbard's Grove, suspended from contiguous huckleberry bushes. The tops of the bushes appearing to grow out of it, little leafy sprigs, had a pleasing effect. An inverted cone eight or nine inches by seven or eight. I found no hornets now buzzing about it. Its entrance appeared to have been enlarged; so I concluded it had been deserted, but, looking nearer I discovered two or three dead hornets, men of war, in the entryway. Cutting off the bushes which sustained it, I proceeded to open it with my knife. First there were half a dozen layers of waved brownish paper resting loosely on one another, occupying nearly an inch in thickness, for a covering. Within were the six-sided cells in three stories, suspended from the roof and from one another by one or two suspension rods only, the lower story much smaller than the rest. And in what may be called the attic garret of the structure were two live hornets apparently partially benumbed with cold, which in the sun seemed rapidly recovering themselves, — their faculties. Most of the cells were empty, but in some were young hornets still, their heads projecting, apparently still-born, perhaps overtaken unexpectedly by cold weather. These insects appear to be very sensible to cold. The inner circles of cells were made of whitish, the outer of grayish, paper. It was like a deserted castle of the Mohawks, a few dead ones at the entrance of their castle.[1]

[1] [Channing, pp. 249, 250.]

I watched the seeds of the milkweed rising higher and higher till lost in the sky, with as much interest as his friends did Mr. Lauriat.[1] I brought home two of the pods which were already bursting open, and amused myself from day to day with releasing the seeds and watching [them] rise slowly into the heavens till they were lost to my eye. No doubt the greater or less rapidity with which they rose would serve as a natural barometer to test the condition of the air.

The hornets' nest not brown but gray, two shades, whitish and dark, alternating on the outer layers or the covering, giving it a waved appearance.

In these cooler, windier, crystal days the note of the jay sounds a little more native. Standing on the Cliffs, I see them flitting and screaming from pine to pine beneath, displaying their gaudy blue pinions. Hawks, too, I perceive, sailing about in the clear air, looking white against the green pines, like the seeds of the milkweed. There is almost always a pair of hawks. Their shrill scream, that of the owls, and wolves are all related.

Sept. 26. Since I perambulated the bounds of the town, I find that I have in some degree confined myself, —my vision and my walks. On whatever side I look off I am reminded of the mean and narrow-minded men whom I have lately met there. What can be uglier than a country occupied by grovelling, coarse, and low-lived men? No scenery will redeem it. What can be more beautiful than any scenery inhabited by heroes? Any

[1] [Channing, p. 204.]

landscape would be glorious to me, if I were assured that its sky was arched over a single hero. Hornets, hyenas, and baboons are not so great a curse to a country as men of a similar character. It is a charmed circle which I have drawn around my abode, having walked not with God but with the devil. I am too well aware when I have crossed this line.

Most New England biographies and journals — John Adams's not excepted — affect me like opening of the tombs.

The prudent and seasonable farmers are already plowing against another year.

Sept. 27. Here is a cloudy day, and now the fisherman is out. Some tall, many-flowered, bluish-white asters are still abundant by the brook-sides.

I never found a pitcher-plant without an insect in it. The bristles about the nose of the pitcher all point inward, and insects which enter or fall in appear for this reason unable to get out again. It is some obstacle which our senses cannot appreciate. Pitcher-plants more obvious now.

We of Massachusetts boast a good deal of what we do for the education of our people, of our district-school system; and yet our district schools are as it were but infant-schools, and we have no system for the education of the great mass who are grown up. I have yet to learn that one cent is spent by this town, this political community called Concord, directly to educate the great mass of its inhabitants who have long since left the district school; for the Lyceum, impor-

tant as it is comparatively, though absolutely trifling, is supported by individuals. There are certain refining and civilizing influences, as works of art, journals and books, and scientific instruments, which this community is amply rich enough to purchase, which would educate this village, elevate its tone of thought, and, if it alone improved these opportunities, easily make it the centre of civilization in the known world, put us on a level as to opportunities at once with London and Arcadia, and secure us a culture at once superior to both. Yet we spend sixteen thousand dollars on a Town House, a hall for our political meetings mainly, and nothing to educate ourselves who are grown up. Pray is there nothing in the market, no advantages, no intellectual food worth buying? Have Paris and London and New York and Boston nothing to dispose of which this village might try and appropriate to its own use? Might not this great villager adorn his villa with a few pictures and statues, enrich himself with a choice library as available, without being cumbrous, as any in the world, with scientific instruments for such as have a taste to use them? Yet we are contented to be countrified, to be provincial. I am astonished to find that in this Nineteenth Century, in this land of free schools, we spend absolutely nothing as a town on our own education, cultivation, civilization. Each town, like each individual, has its own character, — some more, some less, cultivated. I know many towns so mean-spirited and benighted that it would be a disgrace to belong to them. I believe that some of our New England villages within thirty miles of Boston are as boor-

ish and barbarous communities as there are on the face of the earth. And how much superior are the best of them? If London has any refinement, any information to sell, why should we not buy it? Would not the town of Carlisle do well to spend sixteen thousand dollars on its own education at once, if it could only find a schoolmaster for itself? It has one man, as I hear, who takes the *North American Review*. That will never civilize them, I fear. Why should not the town itself take the London and Edinburgh Reviews, and put itself in communication with whatever sources of light and intelligence there are in the world? Yet Carlisle is very little behind Concord in these respects. I do not know but it spends its proportional part on education. How happens it that the only libraries which the towns possess are the district school libraries,—books for children only, or for readers who must needs be written down to? Why should they not have a library, if not so extensive, yet of the same stamp and more select than the British Museum? It is not that the town cannot well afford to buy these things, but it is unaspiring and ignorant of its own wants. It sells milk, but it only builds larger barns with the money which it gets for its milk. Undoubtedly every New England village is as able to surround itself with as many civilizing influences of this kind [as] the members of the English nobility; and here there need be no peasantry. If the London *Times* is the best newspaper in the world, why does not the village of Concord take it, that its inhabitants may read it, and not the second best? If the South Sea explorers have at length got their story ready, and Congress has

neglected to make it accessible to the people, why does not Concord purchase one for its grown-up children? [1]

Parrot in his "Journey to Ararat," speaking of the difficulty of reaching it owing to the lateness of the season, says of the surrounding country, "As early even as the month of June vegetable life becomes in a manner extinct, from the combined influence of the sun's rays, and the aridity of the atmosphere and soil: the plains and mountain-sides, being destitute of both wood and water, have no covering but a scanty and burnt herbage, the roots of which are so rarely visited by a refreshing shower that the reparatory power of nature is all but lost, while the active animal kingdom seeks protection against the heat and drought either by burrowing in the earth, or retiring to the cool and inaccessible retreats in Caucasus and the mountains of Asia Minor."

This reminds me of what I have observed even in our own summers. With us, too, "vegetable life becomes in a manner extinct" by the end of June, and the beholder is impressed as if "the reparatory power of nature [were] all but lost."

2 P. M. — Rowed down the river to Ball's Hill.

The maples by the riverside look very green yet, — have not begun to blush, nor are the leaves touched by frost. Not so on the uplands. The river is so low that, off N. Barrett's shore, some low islands are exposed, covered with a green grass like mildew. There are all

[1] [See *Journal*, vol. iv, Aug. 29, 1852; also *Walden*, pp. 120–122; Riv. 171–173.]

kinds of boats chained to trees and stumps by the river-side, — some from Boston and the salt [water], — but I think that none after all is so suitable and convenient as the simple flat-bottomed and light boat that has long been made here by the farmers themselves. They are better adapted to the river than those made in Boston.

From Ball's Hill the Great Meadows, now smoothly shorn, have a quite imposing appearance, so spacious and level. There is so little of this level land in our midst. There is a shadow on the sides of the hills surrounding (a cloudy day), and where the meadow meets them it is darkest. The shadow deepens down the woody hills and is most distinctly dark where they meet the meadow line. Now the sun in the west is coming out and lights up the river a mile off, so that it shines with a white light like a burnished silver mirror. The poplar tree seems quite important to the scene. The pastures are so dry that the cows have been turned on to the meadow, but they gradually desert it, all feeding one way. The patches of sunlight on the meadow look luridly yellow, as if flames were traversing it. It is a day for fishermen. The farmers are gathering in their corn. The *Mikania scandens* and the button-bushes and the pickerel-weed are sere and flat with frost. We looked down the long reach toward Carlisle Bridge. The river, which is as low as ever, still makes a more than respectable appearance here and is of generous width. Rambled over the hills toward Tarbell's. The huckleberry bushes appear to be unusually red this fall, reddening these hills. We scared a calf out of the meadow, which ran like a ship tossed on the waves, over the hills toward Tarbell's.

They run awkwardly, red oblong squares tossing up and down like a vessel in a storm, with great commotion.[1] We fell into the path, printed by the feet of the calves, with no cows' tracks. The note of the yellow-hammer is heard from the edges of the fields. The soapwort gentian looks like a flower prematurely killed by the frost. The soil of these fields looks as yellowish-white as the corn-stalks themselves. Tarbell's hip-roofed house looked the picture of retirement, — of cottage size, under its noble elm, with its heap of apples before the door and the wood coming up within a few rods, — it being far off the road. The smoke from his chimney so white and vapor-like, like a winter scene. The lower limbs of the willows and maples and button-bushes are covered with the black and dry roots of the water-marigold and the ranunculi, plants with filiform, capillary, root-like submerged leaves.

Sept. 28. A considerable part of the last two nights and yesterday, a steady and rather warm rain, such as we have not had for a long time. This morning it is still completely overcast and drizzling a little. Flocks of small birds — apparently sparrows, bobolinks (or some bird of equal size with a pencilled breast which makes a musical clucking), and piping goldfinches — are flitting about like leaves and hopping up on to the bent grass stems in the garden, letting themselves down to the heavy heads, either shaking or picking out a seed or two, then alighting to pick it up. I am amused to see them hop up on to the slender, drooping grass stems;

[1] [Channing, p. 221.]

then slide down, or let themselves down, as it were foot over foot, with great fluttering, till they can pick at the head and release a few seeds; then alight to pick them up. They seem to prefer a coarse grass which grows like a weed in the garden between the potato-hills, also the amaranth.[1]

It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. They say that this has been a good year to raise turkeys, it has been so dry. So that we shall have something to be thankful for.

Hugh Miller, in his "Old Red Sandstone," speaking of "the consistency of style which obtains among the ichthyolites of this formation" and the "microscopic beauty of these ancient fishes," says: "The artist who sculptured the cherry stone consigned it to a cabinet, and placed a microscope beside it; the microscopic beauty of these ancient fish was consigned to the twilight depths of a primeval ocean. There is a feeling which at times grows upon the painter and the statuary, as if the perception and love of the beautiful had been sublimed into a kind of moral sense. Art comes to be pursued for its own sake; the exquisite conception in the mind, or the elegant and elaborate model, becomes all in all to the worker, and the dread of criticism or the appetite of praise almost nothing. And thus, through the influence of a power somewhat akin to conscience, but whose province is not the just and the good, but the fair, the refined, the exquisite, have works prosecuted in solitude, and never intended for the world, been found fraught with loveliness." The hesitation with

[1] [See p. 83.]

which this is said — to say nothing of its simplicity — betrays a latent infidelity more fatal far than that of the "Vestiges of Creation," which in another work this author endeavors to correct. He describes that as an exception which is in fact the rule. The supposed want of harmony between "the perception and love of the beautiful" and a delicate moral sense betrays what kind of beauty the writer has been conversant with. He speaks of his work becoming all in all to the worker, his rising above the dread of criticism and the appetite of praise, as if these were the very rare exceptions in a great artist's life, and not the very definition of it.

2 P. M. — To Conantum.

A warm, damp, mistling day, without much wind. The white pines in Hubbard's Grove have now a pretty distinct parti-colored look, — green and yellow mottled, — reminding me of some plants like the milkweed, expanding with maturity and pushing off their downy seeds. They have a singularly soft look. For a week or ten days I have ceased to look for new flowers or carry my botany in my pocket. The fall dandelion is now very fresh and abundant in its prime.

I see where the squirrels have carried off the ears of corn more than twenty rods from the corn-field into the woods. A little further on, beyond Hubbard's Brook, I saw a gray squirrel with an ear of yellow corn a foot long sitting on the fence, fifteen rods from the field. He dropped the corn, but continued to sit on the rail, where I could hardly see him, it being of the same color with himself, which I have no doubt he was well

aware of. He next took to a red maple, where his policy was to conceal himself behind the stem, hanging perfectly still there till I passed, his fur being exactly the color of the bark. When I struck the tree and tried to frighten him, he knew better than to run to the next tree, there being no continuous row by which he might escape; but he merely fled higher up and put so many leaves between us that it was difficult to discover him. When I threw up a stick to frighten him, he disappeared entirely, though I kept the best watch I could, and stood close to the foot of the tree. They are wonderfully cunning.[1]

The *Eupatorium purpureum* is early killed by frost and stands now all dry and brown by the sides of other herbs like the goldenrod and tansy, which are quite green and in blossom.

The railroads as much as anything appear to have unsettled the farmers. Our young Concord farmers and their young wives, hearing this bustle about them, seeing the world all going by as it were, — some daily to the cities about their business, some to California, — plainly cannot make up their minds to live the quiet, retired, old-fashioned, country-farmer's life. They are impatient if they live more than a mile from a railroad. While all their neighbors are rushing to the road, there are few who have character or bravery enough to live off the road. He is too well aware what is going on in the world not to wish to take some part in it. I was reminded of this by meeting S. Tuttle in his wagon.

The pontederia, which apparently makes the mass of

[1] [Channing, pp. 175, 176.]

the weeds by the side of the river, is all dead and brown and has been for some time; the year is over for it.

The mist is so thin that it is like haze or smoke in the air, imparting a softness to the landscape.

Sitting by the spruce swamp in Conant's Grove, I am reminded that this is a perfect day to visit the swamps, with its damp, mistling, mildewy air, so solemnly still. There are the spectre-like black spruces hanging with usnea moss, and in the rear rise the dark green pines and oaks on the hillside, touched here and there with livelier tints where a maple or birch may stand, this so luxuriant vegetation standing heavy, dark, sombre, like mould in a cellar. The peculiar tops of the spruce are seen against this.

I hear the barking of a red squirrel, who is alarmed at something, and a great scolding or ado among the jays, who make a great cry about nothing. The swamp is bordered with the red-berried alder, or prinos, and the button-bush. The balls of the last appear not half grown this season, — probably on account of the drought, — and now they are killed by frost.

This swamp contains beautiful specimens of the sidesaddle-flower (*Sarracenia purpurea*), better called pitcher-plant. They ray out around the dry scape and flower, which still remain, resting on rich uneven beds of a coarse reddish moss, through which the small-flowered andromeda puts up, presenting altogether a most rich and luxuriant appearance to the eye. Though the moss is comparatively dry, I cannot walk without upsetting the numerous pitchers, which are now full of water, and so wetting my feet. I once accidentally

sat down on such a bed of pitcher-plants, and found an uncommonly wet seat where I expected a dry one. These leaves are of various colors from plain green to a rich striped yellow or deep red. No plants are more richly painted and streaked than the inside of the broad lips of these. Old Josselyn called this "Hollow-leaved Lavender." No other plant, methinks, that we have is so remarkable and singular.

Here was a large hornets' nest, which when I went to take and first knocked on it to see if anybody was at home, out came the whole swarm upon me lively enough. I do not know why they should linger longer than their fellows whom I saw the other day, unless because the swamp is warmer. They were all within and not working, however.

I picked up two arrowheads in the field beyond.

What honest, homely, earth-loving, unaspiring houses they used to live in! Take that on Conantum for instance, — so low you can put your hand on the eaves behind. There are few whose pride could stoop to enter such a house to-day. And then the broad chimney, built for comfort, not for beauty, with no coping of bricks to catch the eye, no alto or basso relievo.

The mist has now thickened into a fine rain, and I retreat.

Sept. 29. Van der Donck says of the water-beech (buttonwood), "This tree retains the leaves later than any other tree of the woods."

P. M. — To Goose Pond *via* E. Hosmer's; return by Walden.

Found Hosmer carting out manure from under his barn to make room for the winter. He said he was tired of farming, he was too old. Quoted Webster as saying that he had never eaten the bread of idleness for a single day, and thought that Lord Brougham might have said as much with truth while he was in the opposition, but he did not know that he could say as much of himself. However, he did not wish to be idle, he merely wished to rest.

Looked on Walden from the hill with the sawed pine stump on the north side. Scared up three black ducks, which rose with a great noise of their wings, striking the water. The hills this fall are unusually red, not only with the huckleberry, but the sumach and the blackberry vines.

Walden plainly can never be spoiled by the woodchopper, for, do what you will to the shore, there will still remain this crystal well. The intense brilliancy of the red-ripe maples scattered here and there in the midst of the green oaks and hickories on its hilly shore is quite charming. They are unexpectedly and incredibly brilliant, especially on the western shore and close to the water's edge, where, alternating with yellow birches and poplars and green oaks, they remind me of a line of soldiers, redcoats and riflemen in green mixed together.[1]

The pine is one of the richest of trees to my eye. It stands like a great moss, a luxuriant mildew, — the pumpkin pine, — which the earth produces without effort.

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 283; Riv. 347; *Journal*, Oct. 31, 1858.]

The poet writes the history of his body.

Query: Would not the cellular tissue of the grass poly make good tinder? I find that, when I light it, it burns up slowly and entirely, without blaze, like spunk.

Sept. 30. To powder-mills, and set an intermediate bound-stone on the new road there.

Saw them making hoops for powder-casks, of alder and the sprouts of the white birch, which are red with whitish spots. How interesting it is to observe a particular use discovered in any material! I am pleased to find that the artisan has good reason for preferring one material to another for a particular purpose. I am pleased to learn that a man has detected any *use* in wood or stone or any material, or, in other words, its relation to man.

The white ash has got its autumnal mulberry hue. What is the autumnal tint of the black ash? The former contrasts strongly with the other shade-trees on the village street — the elms and buttonwoods — at this season, looking almost black at the first glance. The different characters of the trees appear [more clearly] at this season, when their leaves, so to speak, are ripe, than at any other, — than in the winter, for instance, when they are little remarkable and almost uniformly gray or brown, or in the spring and summer, when they are undistinguishably green. Now a red maple, an ash, a white birch, a *Populus grandidentata*, etc., is distinguished almost as far as they are visible. It is with leaves as with fruits and woods, and animals and men; when they are mature their different characters appear.

The sun has been obscured much of the day by passing clouds, but now, at 5 P. M., the sun comes out and by the very clear and brilliant light, — though the shadows begin to fall long from the trees, — it is proved how remarkably clear or pure the atmosphere is. According to all accounts, an hour of such a light would be something quite memorable in England.

As the wood of an old Cremona, its very fibre, perchance, harmoniously transposed and educated to resound melody, has brought a great price, so methinks these telegraph-posts should bear a great price with musical instrument makers. It is prepared to be the material of harps for ages to come, as it were put asoak in and seasoning in music.

Saw a hornets' nest on a tree over the road near the powder-mills, thirty or forty feet high.

Even the pearl, like the beautiful galls on the oaks, is said to be the production of diseases, or rather obstruction, the fish covering as with a tear some rough obstruction that has got into his shell.

Oct. 1. 5 P. M. — Just put a fugitive slave, who has taken the name of Henry Williams, into the cars for Canada. He escaped from Stafford County, Virginia, to Boston last October; has been in Shadrach's place at the Cornhill Coffee-House; had been corresponding through an agent with his master, who is his father, about buying himself, his master asking $600, but he having been able to raise only $500. Heard that there were writs out for two Williamses, fugitives, and was informed by his fellow-servants and employer that Auger-

hole Burns and others of the police had called for him when he was out. Accordingly fled to Concord last night on foot, bringing a letter to our family from Mr. Lovejoy of Cambridge and another which Garrison had formerly given him on another occasion. He lodged with us, and waited in the house till funds were collected with which to forward him. Intended to dispatch him at noon through to Burlington, but when I went to buy his ticket, saw one at the depot who looked and behaved so much like a Boston policeman that I did not venture that time. An intelligent and very well-behaved man, a mulatto.

There is art to be used, not only in selecting wood for a withe, but in using it. Birch withes are twisted, I suppose in order that the fibres may be less abruptly bent; or is it only by accident that they are twisted?

The slave said he could guide himself by many other stars than the north star, whose rising and setting he knew. They steered for the north star even when it had got round and appeared to them to be in the south. They frequently followed the telegraph when there was no railroad. The slaves bring many superstitions from Africa. The fugitives sometimes superstitiously carry a turf in their hats, thinking that their success depends on it.

These days when the trees have put on their autumnal tints are the gala days of the year, when the very foliage of trees is colored like a blossom. It is a proper time for a yearly festival, an agricultural show.

Candle-light. — To Conantum.

The moon not quite half full. The twilight is much

shorter now than a month ago, probably as the atmosphere is clearer and there is less to reflect the light. The air is cool, and the ground also feels cold under my feet, as if the grass were wet with dew, which is not yet the case. I go through Wheeler's corn-field in the twilight, where the stalks are bleached almost white, and his tops are still stacked along the edge of the field. The moon is not far up above the southwestern horizon. Looking west at this hour, the earth is an unvaried, undistinguishable black in contrast with the twilight sky. It is as if you were walking in night up to your chin. There is no wind stirring. An oak tree in Hubbard's pasture stands absolutely motionless and dark against the sky. The crickets sound farther off or fainter at this season, as if they had gone deeper into the sod to avoid the cold. There are no crickets heard on the alders on the causeway. The moon looks colder in the water, though the water-bugs are still active. There is a great change between this and my last moonlight walk. I experience a comfortable warmth when I approach the south side of a dry wood, which keeps off the cooler air and also retains some of the warmth of day. The voices of travellers in the road are heard afar over the fields, even to Conantum house. The stars are brighter than before. The moon is too far west to be seen reflected in the river at Tupelo Cliff, but the stars are reflected. The river is a dark mirror with bright points feebly fluctuating. I smell the bruised horsemint, which I cannot see, while I sit on the brown rocks by the shore. I see the glow-worm under the damp cliff. No whip-poor-wills are heard to-night, and scarcely a note of any

other bird. At 8 o'clock the fogs have begun, which, with the low half-moon shining on them, look like cobwebs or thin white veils spread over the earth. They are the dreams or visions of the meadow.

The second growth of the white pine is probably softer and more beautiful than the primitive forest ever afforded. The primitive forest is more grand with its bare mossy stems and ragged branches, but exhibits no such masses of green needles trembling in the light.

The elms are generally of a dirty or brownish yellow now.

Oct. 2. P. M. — Some of the white pines on Fair Haven Hill have just reached the acme of their fall; others have almost entirely shed their leaves, and they are scattered over the ground and the walls. The same is the state of the pitch pines. At the Cliffs, I find the wasps prolonging their short lives on the sunny rocks, just as they endeavored to do at my house in the woods. It is a little hazy as I look into the west to-day. The shrub oaks on the terraced plain are now almost uniformly of a deep red.

Oct. 4. *Saturday.* The emigrant has for weeks been tossing on the Atlantic and perchance as long ascending the St. Lawrence with contrary winds, conversant as yet in the New World only with the dreary coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and the comparatively wild shores of the river below the Isle of Orleans. It is said that, under these circumstances, the sudden

apparition of Quebec on turning Point Levi makes a memorable impression on the beholder.[1]

Minott was telling me to-day that he used to know a man in Lincoln who had no floor to his barn, but waited till the ground froze, then swept it clean in his barn and threshed his grain on it. He also used to see men threshing their buckwheat in the field where it grew, having just taken off the surface down to a hard-pan.

Minott used the word "gavel" to describe a parcel of stalks cast on the ground to dry. His are good old English words, and I am always sure to find them in the dictionary, though I never heard them before in my life.

I was admiring his corn-stalks disposed about the barn to dry, over or astride the braces and the timbers, of such a fresh, clean, and handsome green, retaining their strength and nutritive properties so, unlike the gross and careless husbandry of speculating, money-making farmers, who suffer their stalks to remain out till they are dry and dingy and black as chips.

Minott is, perhaps, the most poetical farmer — who most realizes to me the poetry of the farmer's life — that I know. He does nothing with haste and drudgery, but as if he loved it. He makes the most of his labor, and takes infinite satisfaction in every part of it. He is not looking forward to the sale of his crops or any pecuniary profit, but he is paid by the constant satisfaction which his labor yields him. He has not too much land to trouble him, — too much work to do, — no hired man nor

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 88; Riv. 109.]

boy, — but simply to amuse himself and live. He cares not so much to raise a large crop as to do his work well. He knows every pin and nail in his barn. If another linter is to be floored, he lets no hired man rob him of that amusement, but he goes slowly to the woods and, at his leisure, selects a pitch pine tree, cuts it, and hauls it or gets it hauled to the mill; and so he knows the history of his barn floor.

Farming is an amusement which has lasted him longer than gunning or fishing. He is never in a hurry to get his garden planted and yet [it] is always planted soon enough, and none in the town is kept so beautifully clean.

He always prophesies a failure of the crops, and yet is satisfied with what he gets. His barn floor is fastened down with oak pins, and he prefers them to iron spikes, which he says will rust and give way. He handles and amuses himself with every ear of his corn crop as much as a child with its playthings, and so his small crop goes a great way. He might well cry if it were carried to market. The seed of weeds is no longer in his soil.

He loves to walk in a swamp in windy weather and hear the wind groan through the pines. He keeps a cat in his barn to catch the mice. He indulges in no luxury of food or dress or furniture, yet he is not penurious but merely simple. If his sister dies before him, he may have to go to the almshouse in his old age; yet he is not poor, for he does not want riches. He gets out of each manipulation in the farmers' operations a fund of entertainment which the speculating drudge hardly knows. With never-failing rheumatism and trembling hands,

he seems yet to enjoy perennial health. Though he never reads a book, — since he has finished the "Naval Monument," — he speaks the best of English.

Oct. 5. Sunday. I noticed on Friday, October 3d, that the willows generally were green and unchanged. The red maples varied from green through yellow to bright red. The black cherry was green inclining to yellow. (I speak of such trees as I chanced to see.) The apple trees, green but shedding their leaves like most of the trees. Elm, a dingy yellow. White ash, from green to dark purple or mulberry. White oak, green inclining to yellow. Tupelo, reddish yellow and red; tree bushed about the head, limbs small and slanting downward. Some maples when ripe are yellow or whitish yellow, others reddish yellow, others bright red, by the accident of the season or position, — the more or less light and sun, being on the edge or in the midst of the wood; just as the fruits are more or less deeply colored. Birches, green and yellow. Swamp white oak, a yellowish green. Black ash, greenish yellow and now sered by frost. Bass, sered yellowish.

Color in the maturity of foliage is as variable and little characteristic as naturalists have found it to be for distinguishing fishes and quadrupeds, etc.

Observed that the woodchuck has two or more holes, a rod or two apart: one, or the front door, where the excavated sand is heaped up; another, not so easily discovered, very small, round, without any sand about it, — being that by which he emerged, — smaller directly at the surface than beneath, on the principle by which

a well is dug,[1] making as small a hole as possible at the surface to prevent caving. About these holes is now seen their manure, apparently composed chiefly of the remains of crickets, which are seen crawling over the sand. Saw a very fat woodchuck on a wall, evidently prepared to go into winter quarters.[2]

Still purplish asters, and late goldenrods, and fragrant life-everlasting, and purple gerardia, great bidens, etc., etc. The dogwood by the Corner road has lost every leaf, its bunches of dry greenish berries hanging straight down from the bare stout twigs as if their peduncles were broken. It has assumed its winter aspect, — a mithridatic look. The prinos berries are quite red.[3] The panicled hawkweed is one of those yellowish spherical or hemispherical fuzzy-seeded plants which you see about the wood-paths and fields at present, which however only a strong wind can blow far. Saw by the path-side beyond the Conant spring that singular jelly-like sort of mushroom which I saw last spring while surveying White's farm; now red, globular, three quarters of an inch in diameter, covering the coarse moss by the ruts on the path-side with jelly-covered seeds(?).

2 P. M. — To the high open land between Bateman's Pond and the lime-kiln.

It is a still, cloudy afternoon, rather cool. As I go past Cheney's boat-house, the river looks lighter than the sky. The butternuts have shed nearly all their leaves, and their nuts are seen black against the sky. The white oaks are turned a reddish brown in some valleys. The

[1] [Channing, p. 221.] [2] [*Ibid.*] [3] [Channing, p. 250.]

Norway cinquefoil and a smaller cinquefoil are still in blossom, and also the late buttercup. My companion remarked that the land (for the most part consisting of decayed orchards, huckleberry pastures, and forests) on both sides of the old Carlisle road, uneven and undulating like the road, appeared to be all in motion like the traveller, travelling on with him. Found a wild russet apple, very good, of peculiar form, flattened at the poles. Some red maples have entirely lost their leaves. The black birch is straw-colored.[1]

The rocks in the high open pasture are peculiar and interesting to walk over, for, though presenting broad and flat surfaces, the strata are perpendicular, producing a grained and curled appearance, — this rocky crown like a hoary head covered with curly hair, — or it is like walking over the edges of the leaves of a vast book. I wonder how these rocks were ever worn even thus smooth by the elements. The strata are remarkably serpentine or waving. It appears as if you were upon the axis of elevation, geologically speaking. I do not remember any other pasture in Concord where the rocks are so remarkable for this.

What is that fleshy or knot-fleshy [?] root which we found in the soil on the rocks by Bateman's Pond, which looked so edible? All meadows and swamps have been remarkably dry this year, and are still, notwithstanding the few showers and rainy days. Witch-hazel now in bloom. I perceive the fragrance of ripe grapes in the air, and after a little search discover the ground covered with them, — where the frost has stripped the vines

[1] [Channing, p. 250.]

of leaves, — still fresh and plump and perfectly ripe. The little conical burs of the agrimony stick to my clothes. The pale lobelia still blooms freshly. The rough hawkweed holds up its globes of yellowish fuzzy seeds as well as the panicled. The clouds have cleared away, the sun come out, and it is warmer and very pleasant. The declining sun, falling on the willows, etc., below Mrs. Ripley's and on the water, produces a rare, soft light, such as I do not often see, a greenish yellow.[1] The milkweed seeds are in the air. I see one in the river, which a minnow occasionally jostles.

Stood near a small rabbit, hardly half grown, by the old Carlisle road.

I hear the red-wing blackbirds by the riverside again, as if it were a new spring. They appear to have come to bid farewell. The birds appear to depart with the coming of the frosts, which kill vegetation and, directly or indirectly, the insects on which they feed. The American bittern (*Ardea minor*) flew across the river, trailing his legs in the water, scared up by us. This, according to Peabody, is the boomer (stake-driver). In their sluggish flight they can hardly keep their legs up. Wonder if they can soar.

8 P. M. — To Cliffs.

Moon three-quarters full. The nights now are very still, for there is hardly any noise of birds or of insects. The whip-poor-will is not heard, nor the mosquito; only the occasional lisping of some sparrow. The moon gives not a creamy but white, cold light, through which

[1] [Channing, p. 250.]

you can see far distinctly. About villages you hear the bark of dogs instead of the howl of wolves. When I descend into the valley by Wheeler's grain-field, I find it quite cold. The sand slopes in the Deep Cut gleam coldly as if covered with rime. As I go through the Spring Woods I perceive a sweet, dry scent from the underwoods like that of the fragrant life-everlasting. I suppose it is that. To appreciate the moonlight you must stand in the shade and see where a few rods or a few feet distant it falls in between the trees. It is a "milder day," made for some inhabitants whom you do not see. The fairies are a quiet, gentle folk, invented plainly to inhabit the moonlight. I frequently see a light on the ground within thick and dark woods where all around is in shadow, and haste forward, expecting to find some decayed and phosphorescent stump, but find it to be some clear moonlight that falls in between some crevice in the leaves. As moonlight is to sunlight, so are the fairies to men.

Standing on the Cliffs, no sound comes up from the woods. The earth has gradually turned more northward; the birds have fled south after the sun, and this impresses me, as well by day as by night, as a deserted country. There is a down-like mist over the river and pond, and there are no bright reflections of the moon or sheeniness from the pond in consequence, all the light being absorbed by the low fog.

Oct. 6. *Monday.* 12 M. — To Bedford line to set a stone by river on Bedford line.

The reach of the river between Bedford and Carlisle,

seen from a distance in the road to-day, as formerly, has a singularly ethereal, celestial, or elysian look. It is of a light sky-blue, alternating with smoother white streaks, where the surface reflects the light differently, like a milk-pan full of the milk of Valhalla partially skimmed, more gloriously and heavenly fair and pure than the sky itself. It is something more celestial than the sky above it. I never saw any water look so celestial. I have often noticed it. I believe I have seen this reach from the hill in the middle of Lincoln. We have names for the rivers of hell, but none for the rivers of heaven, unless the Milky Way be one. It is such a smooth and shining blue, like a panoply of sky-blue plates.[1] Our dark and muddy river has such a tint in this case as I might expect Walden or White Pond to exhibit, if they could be seen under similar circumstances, but Walden seen from Fair Haven is, if I remember, of a deep blue color tinged with green. Cerulean? Such water as that river reach appears to me of quite incalculable value, and the man who would blot that out of his prospect for a sum of money does not otherwise than to sell heaven.

George Thatcher, having searched an hour in vain this morning to find a frog, caught a pickerel with a mullein leaf.

The white ash near our house, which the other day was purple or mulberry-color, is now much more red.

7.30 P. M. — To Fair Haven Pond by boat, the moon four-fifths full, not a cloud in the sky; paddling all the way.

[1] [Channing, p. 251.]

The water perfectly still, and the air almost, the former gleaming like oil in the moonlight, with the moon's disk reflected in it.

When we started, saw some fishermen kindling their fire for spearing by the riverside. It was a lurid, reddish blaze, contrasting with the white light of the moon, with dense volumes of black smoke from the burning pitch pine roots rolling upward in the form of an inverted pyramid. The blaze reflected in the water, almost as distinct as the substance. It looked like tarring a ship on the shore of the Styx or Cocytus. For it is still and dark, notwithstanding the moon, and no sound but the crackling of the fire. The fishermen can be seen only near at hand, though their fire is visible far away; and then they appear as dusky, fuliginous figures, half enveloped in smoke, seen only by their enlightened sides. Like devils they look, clad in old coats to defend themselves from the fogs, one standing up forward holding the spear ready to dart, while the smoke and flames are blown in his face, the other paddling the boat slowly and silently along close to the shore with almost imperceptible motion.

The river appears indefinitely wide; there is a mist rising from the water, which increases the indefiniteness. A high bank or moonlit hill rises at a distance over the meadow on the bank, with its sandy gullies and clamshells exposed where the Indians feasted. The shore line, though close, is removed by the eye to the side of the hill. It is at high-water mark. It is continued till it meets the hill. Now the fisherman's fire, left behind, acquires some thick rays in the distance and becomes a

star. As surely as sunlight falling through an irregular chink makes a round figure on the opposite wall, so the blaze at a distance appears a star. Such is the effect of the atmosphere. The bright sheen of the moon is constantly travelling with us, and is seen at the same angle in front on the surface of the pads; and the reflection of its disk in the rippled water by our boat-side appears like bright gold pieces falling on the river's counter. This coin is incessantly poured forth as from some unseen horn of plenty at our side.

(I hear a lark singing this morn (October 7th), and yesterday saw them in the meadows. Both larks and blackbirds are heard again now occasionally, seemingly after a short absence, as if come to bid farewell.)

I do not know but the weirdness of the gleaming oily surface is enhanced by the thin fog. A few water-bugs are seen glancing in our course.

I shout like a farmer to his oxen, — a short barking shout, — and instantly the woods on the eastern shore take it up, and the western hills a little up the stream; and so it appears to rebound from one side the river valley to the other, till at length I hear a farmer call to his team far up as Fair Haven Bay, whither we are bound.

We pass through reaches where there is no fog, perhaps where a little air is stirring. Our clothes are almost wet through with the mist, as if we sat in water. Some portions of the river are much warmer than others. In one instance it was warmer in the midst of the fog than in a clear reach.

In the middle of the pond we tried the echo again.

First the hill to the right took it up; then further up the stream on the left; and then after a long pause, when we had almost given it up, — and the longer expected, the more in one sense unexpected and surprising it was, — we heard a farmer shout to his team in a distant valley, far up on the opposite side of the stream, much louder than the previous echo; and even after this we heard one shout faintly in some neighboring town. The third echo seemed more loud and distinct than the second. But why, I asked, do the echoes always travel up the stream? I turned about and shouted again, and then I found that they all appeared equally to travel down the stream, or perchance I heard only those that did so.

As we rowed to Fair Haven's eastern shore, a moonlit hill covered with shrub oaks, we could form no opinion of our progress toward it, — not seeing the water-line where it met the hill, — until we saw the weeds and sandy shore and the tall bulrushes rising above the shallow water [like] the masts of large vessels in a haven. The moon was so high that the angle of excidence [*sic*] did not permit of our seeing her reflection in the pond.

As we paddled down the stream with our backs to the moon, we saw the reflection of every wood and hill on both sides distinctly. These answering reflections — shadow to substance — impress the voyager with a sense of harmony and symmetry, as when you fold a blotted paper and produce a regular figure, — a dualism which nature loves. What you commonly see is but half. Where the shore is very low the actual and reflected trees

appear to stand foot to foot, and it is but a line that separates them, and the water and the sky almost flow into one another, and the shore seems to float. As we paddle up or down, we see the cabins of muskrats faintly rising from amid the weeds, and the strong odor of musk is borne to us from particular parts of the shore. Also the odor of a skunk is wafted from over the meadows or fields. The fog appears in some places gathered into a little pyramid or squad by itself, on the surface of the water. Home at ten.

Oct. 7. This morning the fog over the river and the brooks and meadows running into it has risen to the height of forty or fifty feet.

1 P. M. — To river; by boat to Corner Bridge.

A very still, warm, bright, clear afternoon. Our boat so small and low that we are close to the water.[1]

The muskrats all the way are now building their houses, about two thirds done. They are of an oval form (looking down on them), sloping upward from the smaller end, by which the rat apparently ascends, and composed of mouthfuls of pontederia leaf-stems (now dead), the capillaceous roots or leaves of the water-marigold (?) and other capillaceous-leaved water-plants, flag-root, a plant which looks like a cock's tail or a peacock's feather in form,[2] clamshells, etc., sometimes rising from amidst the dead pontederia stems or resting on the button-bushes or the willows. The mouthfuls are disposed in layers successively smaller, forming a somewhat conical mound. Seen at this stage they show some art and a

[1] *Vide* forward, Nov. 9th. [2] The *Potamogeton Robbinsii.*

good deal of labor. We pulled one to pieces to examine the inside. There was a small cavity, which might hold two or three full-grown muskrats, just above the level of the water, quite wet and of course dark and narrow, communicating immediately with a gallery under water. There were a few pieces of the white root of some water-plant — perhaps a pontederia or a lily root — in it. There they dwell, in close contiguity to the water itself, always in a wet apartment, in a wet coat never changed, with immeasurable water in the cellar, through which is the only exit. They have reduced life to a lower scale than Diogenes. Certainly they do not fear cold, ague, or consumption. Think of bringing up a family in such a place, — worse than a Broad Street cellar. But probably these are not their breeding-places. The muskrat and the fresh-water mussel are very native to our river. The Indian, their human compeer, has departed. There is a settler whom our lowlands and our fogs do not hurt. One of the fishermen speared one last night. How long has the muskrat dined on mussels? The river mud itself will have the ague as soon as he. What occasion has he for a dentist? Their unfinished, rapidly rising nests look now like truncated cones. They seem to be all building at once in different parts of the river, and to have advanced equally far.

The weeds being dead and the weather cooler, the water is more transparent. Now is the time to observe such weeds as have not been destroyed. The fishes are plainly seen. Saw a pickerel which had swallowed a smaller fish, with the tail projecting from his mouth. There is a dirty-looking weed quite submerged, with

short, densely crowded, finely divided leaves, in dense masses atop, like the tops of spruce trees, more slender below. The shores for a great width are occupied by the dead leaves and stems of the pontederia, which give the river a very wild look. There is a strong-scented, green plant which looks like a fresh-water sponge or coral, clumsy-limbed like a dead tree, or a cactus. A long narrow grass like a fresh-water eel-grass.

The swamp white oak on the meadow, which was blown down in the spring, is still alive, as if it had been supported by the sap in its trunk. The dirt still adheres to its roots, which are of the color of an elephant's skin.

I suppose it is the *Nuphar Kalmiana* which I find in blossom in deep water, though its long stem, — four feet or more, — round and gradually tapering toward the root with no leaves apparent, makes me doubt a little. Apparently five sepals, greenish and yellow without, yellow within, eight small petals, many stamens, stigma eight-rayed.

Saw the *Ardea minor* walking along the shore, like a hen with long green legs. Its pencilled throat is so like the reeds and shore, amid which it holds its head erect to watch the passer, that it is difficult to discern it. You can get very near it, for it is unwilling to fly, preferring to hide amid the weeds. The lower parts of the willows and the button-bushes are black with the capillaceous leaves and stems of the water-marigold, etc.[1]

The raw edge of the rushes (common *Juncus militaris* I think it is), two to four feet high, in dense fields along

[1] [This is queried in pencil.]

the shore, in various stages of decay, looks like a level rainbow skirting the water's edge and reflected in the water, though a single one, or a few near at hand, do not exhibit very marked or distinct colors. But [at] a distance from a shore which is lined with them, the colors are very distinct and produce a pleasing effect, — first, next the water, a few inches of pink; then a faint narrow line, or halo, of yellowish; then a broad and lively green, the proper color of the rush; then a sunny yellow, passing into the brown of the dead and sered tops. The different parts of the plant from the surface of the water to its tip, when you look at the edge of a large and dense field of them, produce five distinct horizontal and parallel bars of different colors like a level rainbow, — a rainbow-like effect, — making a pleasing border to the river in a bright day like this; and occasionally the sunlight from the rippled surface produced by our boat, reflected on them, enhances the effect. The colors pass into each other so gradually and indefinitely, as if it were the reflection of the sun falling on a mist.

The rounded hills beyond the clamshells look velvety smooth as we are floating down the stream, covered with the now red blackberry vines. The oaks look light against the sky, rising story above story. I see small whitish and pinkish polygonums along the waterside.

There is a great difference between this season and a month ago, — warm as this happens to be, — as between one period of your life and another. A little frost is at the bottom of it.

It is a remarkable difference between night and day on the river, that there is no fog by day.

Oct. 8. *Wednesday.* A slight wind now fills the air with elm leaves. The nights have been cool of late, so that a fire has been comfortable, but the last was quite warm.

2 P. M. — To the Marlborough road.

This day is very warm, yet not bright like the last, but hazy. Picked up an Indian gouge on Dennis's Hill. The foliage has lost its very bright tints now; it is more dull, looks dry, or as if burnt, even. The very ground or grass is crisped with drought, and yields a crispy sound to my feet. The woods are brownish, reddish, yellowish merely, excepting of course the evergreens. It is so warm that I am obliged to take off my neck-handkerchief and laborers complain of the heat.

By the side of J. P. Brown's grain-field I picked up some white oak acorns in the path by the wood-side, which I found to be unexpectedly sweet and palatable, the bitterness being scarcely perceptible. To my taste they are quite as good as chestnuts. No wonder the first men lived on acorns. Such as these are no mean food, such as they are represented to be. Their sweetness is like the sweetness of bread, and to have discovered this palatableness in this neglected nut, the whole world is to me the sweeter for it. I am related again to the first men. What can be handsomer, wear better to the eye, than the color of the acorn, like the leaves on which they fall polished, or varnished? To find that acorns are edible, — it is a greater addition to one's stock of life than would be imagined. I should be at least equally pleased if I were to find that the grass tasted sweet and nutritious. It increases the number of my friends; it diminishes the

number of my foes. How easily at this season I could feed myself in the woods! There is mast for me too, as well as for the pigeon and the squirrel. This Dodonean fruit.

The goldfinches are in the air. I hear a blackbird also, and see a downy woodpecker, and see and hear a hairy one. The seeds of the pasture thistle are not so buoyed up by their down as the milkweed.

In the forenoon commonly I see nature only through a window; in the afternoon my study or apartment in which I sit is a vale.

The farmers are ditching, — redeeming more meadow, — getting corn, collecting their apples, threshing, etc.

I cannot but believe that acorns were intended to be the food of man. They are agreeable to the palate, as the mother's milk to the babe. The sweet acorn tree is famous and well known to the boys. There can be no question respecting the wholesomeness of this diet.

This warm day is a godsend to the wasps. I see them buzzing about the broken windows of deserted buildings, as Jenny Dugan's, — the yellow-knotted. I smell the dry leaves like hay from the woods. Some elms are already bare. The basswood here is quite sere. The pines are still shedding their leaves. This brook by Jenny's is always a pleasant sight and sound to me. In the spring I saw the sucker here. It is remarkable through what narrow and shallow brooks a sucker will be seen to dart, and a trout. I perceive that some white oaks are quite red. The black oaks are yellowish. I know not surely whether the brighter red and more divided leaf is that of the red or the scarlet oak. The jointed polygonum in the Marlborough road is an in-

teresting flower, it is so late, so bright a red, — though inobvious from its minuteness, — without leaves, above the sand like sorrel, mixed with other minute flowers and the empty chalices of the trichostema. I saw one blue curl still adhering. The puffballs are split open and rayed out on the sand like five or *ten* (!) fingers. The milkweed seeds must be carried far, for it is only when a strong wind is blowing that they are loosened from their pods. An arrowhead at the desert. *Spergula arvensis* — corn-spurry (some call it tares) — at the acorn tree. Filled my pockets with acorns. Found another gouge on Dennis's Hill. To have found the Indian gouges and tasted sweet acorns, — is it not enough for one afternoon?

The sun set red in haze, visible fifteen minutes before setting, and the moon rose in like manner at the same time.

This evening, I am obliged to sit with my door and window open, in a thin coat, which I have not done for three weeks at least.

A warm night like this at this season produces its effect on the village. The boys are heard at play in the street now, at 9 o'clock, in greater force and with more noise than usual. My neighbor has got out his flute.

There is more fog than usual. The moon is full. The tops of the woods in the horizon seen above the fog look exactly like long, low black clouds, the fog being the color of the sky.

Oct. 9. Heard two screech owls in the night. Boiled a quart of acorns for breakfast, but found them not so palatable as raw, having acquired a bitterish taste, per-

chance from being boiled with the shells and skins; yet one would soon get accustomed to this.

The sound of foxhounds in the woods, heard now, at 9 A. M., in the village, reminds me of mild winter mornings.

2 P. M. — To Conantum.

In the maple woods the ground is strewn with new-fallen leaves. I hear the green locust again on the alders of the causeway, but he is turned a straw-color. The warm weather has revived them. All the acorns on the same tree are not equally sweet. They appear to dry sweet. From Conantum I see them getting hay from the meadow below the Cliffs. It must have been quite dry when cut. The black ash has lost its leaves, and the white here is dry and brownish yellow, not having turned mulberry. I see half a dozen snakes in this walk, green and striped (one very young striped one), who appear to be out enjoying the sun. They appear to make the most of the last warm days of the year. The hills and plain on the opposite side of the river are covered with deep warm red leaves of shrub oaks. On Lee's hillside by the pond, the old leaves of some pitch pines are almost of a golden-yellow hue, seen in the sunlight, — a rich autumnal look. The green are, as it were, set in the yellow.

The witch-hazel here is in full blossom on this magical hillside, while its broad yellow leaves are falling. Some bushes are completely bare of leaves, and leather-colored they strew the ground. It is an extremely interesting plant, — October and November's child, and yet

reminds me of the very earliest spring. Its blossoms smell like the spring, like the willow catkins; by their color as well as fragrance they belong to the saffron dawn of the year, suggesting amid all these signs of autumn, falling leaves and frost, that the life of Nature, by which she eternally flourishes, is untouched. It stands here in the shadow on the side of the hill, while the sunlight from over the top of the hill lights up its topmost sprays and yellow blossoms. Its spray, so jointed and angular, is not to be mistaken for any other. I lie on my back with joy under its boughs. While its leaves fall, its blossoms spring. The autumn, then, is indeed a spring. All the year is a spring. I see two blackbirds high overhead, going south, but I am going north in my thought with these hazel blossoms. It is a faery place. This is a part of the immortality of the soul. When I was thinking that it bloomed too late for bees or other insects to extract honey from its flowers, — that perchance they yielded no honey, — I saw a bee upon it. How important, then, to the bees this late-blossoming plant!

The circling hawk steers himself through the air, like the skater, without a visible motion.

The hoary cinquefoil in blossom.

A large sassafras tree behind Lee's, two feet diameter at ground. As I return over the bridge, I hear a song sparrow singing on the willows exactly as in spring. I see a large sucker rise to the surface of the river. I hear the crickets singing loudly in the walls as they have not done (so loudly) for some weeks, while the sun is going down shorn of his rays by the haze.

There is a thick bed of leaves in the road under Hubbard's elms. This reminds me of Cato, as if the ancients made more use of nature. He says, "Stramenta si deerunt, frondem iligneam legito, eam substernito ovibus bubusque." (If litter is wanting, gather the leaves of the holm oak and strew them under your sheep and oxen.) In another place he says, "Circum vias ulmos serito, et partim populos, uti frondem ovibus et bubus habeas." I suppose they were getting that dry meadow grass for litter. There is little or no use made by us of the leaves of trees, not even for beds, unless it be sometimes to rake them up in the woods and cast into hog-pens or compost-heaps.

Cut a stout purple cane of pokeweed.

Oct. 10. The air this morning is full of bluebirds, and again it is spring. There are many things to indicate the renewing of spring at this season. The blossoming of spring flowers, — not to mention the witch-hazel, — the notes of spring birds, the springing of grain and grass and other plants.

Ah, I yearn toward thee, my friend, but I have not confidence in thee. We do not believe in the same God. I am not thou; thou art not I. We trust each other to-day, but we distrust to-morrow. Even when I meet thee unexpectedly, I part from thee with disappointment. Though I enjoy thee more than other men, yet I am more disappointed with thee than with others. I know a noble man; what is it hinders me from knowing him better? I know not how it is that our distrust, our hate, is stronger than our love. Here I have been on

what the world would call friendly terms with one fourteen years, have pleased my imagination sometimes with loving him; and yet our hate is stronger than our love. Why are we related, yet thus unsatisfactorily? We almost are a sore to one another. Ah, I am afraid because thy relations are not my relations. Because I have experienced that in some respects we are strange to one another, strange as some wild creature. Ever and anon there will come the consciousness to mar our love that, change the theme but a hair's breadth, and we are tragically strange to one another. We do not know what hinders us from coming together. But when I consider what my friend's relations and acquaintances are, what his tastes and habits, then the difference between us gets named. I see that all these friends and acquaintances and tastes and habits are indeed my friend's self. In the first place, my friend is prouder than I am, — and I am very proud, perchance.

2 P. M. — To Flint's Pond.

It was the seed-vessel of the Canada snapdragon in the Marlborough road that I mistook for a new flower. This is still in bloom in the Deep Cut. The chickadee, sounding all alone, now that birds are getting scarce, reminds me of the winter, in which it almost alone is heard.

How agreeable to the eye at this season the color of new-fallen leaves (I am going through the young woods where the locusts grow near Goose Pond), sere and crisp! When freshly fallen, with their forms and their veins still distinct, they have a certain life in them still. The chestnut leaves now almost completely cover the ground

under the trees, lying up light and deep, so clean and wholesome, whether to look at or handle or smell, — the tawny leaves, nature's color. They look as if they might all yield a wholesome tea. They are rustling down fast from the young chestnuts, leaving their bare and blackish-looking stems. You make a great noise now walking in the woods, on account of the dry leaves, especially chestnut and oak and maple, that cover the ground. I wish that we might make more use of leaves than we do. We wait till they are reduced to virgin mould. Might we not fill beds with them? or use them for fodder or litter? After they have been flattened by the snow and rain, they will be much less obvious. Now is the time to enjoy the dry leaves. Now all nature is a dried herb, full of medicinal odors. I love to hear of a preference given to one kind of leaves over another for beds. Some maples which a week ago were a mass of yellow foliage are now a fine gray smoke, as it were, and their leaves cover the ground.

Plants have two states, certainly, — the green and the dry. The lespedeza and primrose heads, etc., etc., — I look on these with interest, as if they were newly blossoming plants.

Going through Britton's clearing, I find a black snake out enjoying the sun. I perceive his lustrous greenish blackness. He holds up his head and threatens; then dashes off into the woods, making a great rustling among the leaves. This might be called snake summer or snakes' week.

Our Irish washwoman, seeing me playing with the milkweed seeds, said they filled beds with that down in

her country. They are not indigenous in Europe, at any rate.

The horned utricularia by Flint's Pond still. There a gunner has built his bower to shoot ducks from, far out amid the rushes. The nightshade leaves have turned a very dark purple, almost steel-blue, lighter, more like mulberry, underneath, with light glossy, viscid or sticky spots above, as if covered with dew. I do not think of any other leaf of this color. The delicate pinkish leaves of the *Hypericum Virginicum* about the shore of the pond. The yellow leaves of the clethra mixed with the green.

The stones of Flint's Pond shore are comparatively flat, as the pond is flatter than Walden. The young trees and bushes — perhaps the birches particularly — are covered now with a small yellowish insect like a louse, spotted with green above, which cover the hat and clothes of him who goes through them. Now certainly is the season for rushes, for, most other weeds being dead, these are the more obvious along the shore of the ponds and rivers. A very fair canoe birch near Flint's Pond.

The witch-hazel loves a hillside with or without wood or shrubs. It is always pleasant to come upon it unexpectedly as you are threading the woods in such places. Methinks I attribute to it some elvish quality apart from its fame. It affects a hillside partially covered with young copsewood. I love to behold its *gray speckled stems*. The leaf first green, then yellow for a short season, then, when it touches the ground, tawny leather-color. As I stood amid the witch-hazels near Flint's

Pond, a flock of a dozen chickadees came flitting and singing about me with great ado, — a most cheering and enlivening sound, — with incessant *day-day-day* and a fine wiry strain betweenwhiles, flitting ever nearer and nearer and nearer, inquisitively, till the boldest was within five feet of me; then suddenly, their curiosity satiated, they flit by degrees further away and disappear, and I hear with regret their retreating *day-day-days*.

Saw a smooth sumach beyond Cyrus Smith's, very large.

The elms in the village have lost many of their leaves, and their shadows by moonlight are not so heavy as last month.

Another warm night.

Oct. 12. *Sunday.* Yesterday afternoon, saw by the brook-side above Emerson's the dwarf primrose in blossom, the Norway cinquefoil and fall dandelions which are now drying up, the houstonia, buttercups, small goldenrods, and various asters, more or less purplish.

The seeds of the bidens, — without florets, — or beggar-ticks, with four-barbed awns like hay-hooks, now adhere to your clothes, so that you are all bristling with them. Certainly they adhere to nothing so readily as to woolen cloth, as if in the creation of them the invention of woolen clothing by man had been foreseen. How tenacious of its purpose to spread and plant its race! By all methods nature secures this end, whether by the balloon, or parachute, or hook, or barbed spear like this, or mere lightness which the winds can waft. What are those seeds, big as skunk-cabbage seeds,

amid leafless stalks like pontederia in the brooks, now bending their stems ready to plant themselves at the bottom?

The swamp-pink buds begin to show.

Blackbirds and larks are about, and the flicker or yellow-hammer, so beautifully spotted (in the hand), and the goldfinches. I see a cow in the meadow with a new-dropped calf by her side.

The *Anemone nemorosa* in bloom and the *Potentilla sarmentosa*, or running cinquefoil, which springs in April, now again springing.

I love very well this cloudy afternoon, so sober and favorable to reflection after so many bright ones. What if the clouds shut out the heavens, provided they concentrate my thoughts and make a more celestial heaven below! I hear the crickets plainer; I wander less in my thoughts, am less dissipated; am aware how shallow was the current of my thoughts before. Deep streams are dark, as if there were a cloud in their sky; shallow ones are bright and sparkling, reflecting the sun from their bottoms. The very wind on my cheek seems more fraught with meaning.

Many maples around the edges of the meadows are now quite bare, like smoke.

I seem to be more constantly merged in nature; my intellectual life is more obedient to nature than formerly, but perchance less obedient to spirit. I have less memorable seasons. I exact less of myself. I am getting used to my meanness, getting to accept my low estate. O if I could be discontented with myself! If I could feel anguish at each descent!

The sweet-fern is losing its leaves. I see where a field of oats has been cradled, by the railroad, — alternate white and dark green stripes, the width of a swath, running across the field. I find it arises from the stubble being bent a particular way by the cradle, as the cradler advanced, and accordingly reflecting the light but one way, and if I look over the field from the other side, the first swath will be dark and the latter white.

Minott shells all his corn by hand. He has got a box-ful ready for the mill. He will not winnow it, for he says the chaff (?) makes it lie loose and dry faster. He tells me that Jacob Baker, who raises as fair corn as anybody, gives all the corn of his own raising to his stock, and buys the flat yellow corn of the South for bread; and yet the Northern corn is worth the most per bushel. Minott did not like this kind of farming any better than I. Baker also buys a great quantity of "shorts" below for his cows, to make more milk. He remembers when a Prescott, who lived where E. Hosmer does, used to let his hogs run in the woods in the fall, and they grew quite fat on the acorns, etc., they found, but now there are few nuts, and it is against the law. He tells me of places in the woods which to his eyes are unchanged since he was a boy, as natural as life. He tells me, then, that in some respects he is still a boy. And yet the gray squirrels were ten then to one now. But for the most part, he says, the world is turned upside down.

P. M. — To Cliffs.

I hear Lincoln bell tolling for church. At first I thought of the telegraph harp. Heard at a distance,

the sound of a bell acquires a certain vibratory hum, as it were from the air through which it passes, like a harp. All music is a harp music at length, as if the atmosphere were full of strings vibrating to this music. It is not the mere sound of the bell, but the humming in the air, that enchants me, just [as the] azure tint which much air or distance imparts delights the eye. It is not so much the object, as the object clothed with an azure veil. All sound heard at a great distance thus tends to produce the same music, vibrating the strings of the universal lyre. There comes to me a melody which the air has strained, which has conversed with every leaf and needle of the woods. It is by no means the sound of the bell as heard near at hand, and which at this distance I can plainly distinguish, but its vibrating echoes, that portion of the sound which the elements take up and modulate, — a sound which is very much modified, sifted, and refined before it reaches my ear. The echo is to some extent an independent sound, and therein is the magic and charm of it. It is not merely a repetition of my voice, but it is in some measure the voice of the wood.[1]

A cloudy, misty day with rain more or less steady. This gentle rain is fast loosening the leaves, — I see them filling the air at the least puff, — and it is also flattening down the layer which has already fallen. The pines on Fair Haven have shed nearly all their leaves. Butter-and-eggs still blooms. Barrels of apples lie under the trees. The Smiths have carried their last load of peaches to market.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 136, 137; Riv. 192, 193.]

To-day no part of the heavens is so clear and bright as Fair Haven Pond and the river. Though the air [is] quite misty, yet the island wood is distinctly reflected. Ever and anon I see the mist thickening in the south-west and concealing trees which were before seen, and revealing the direction and limits of the valleys, — pre-cursor of harder rain which soon passes again.

Minott calls the stake-driver "belcher-squelcher." Says he has seen them when making the noise. They go *slug-toot, slug-toot, slug-toot.* Told me of his hunting gray squirrels with old Colonel Brooks's hound. How the latter came into the yard one day, and he spoke to him, patted him, went into the house, took down his gun marked London, thought he would go a-squirrel-hunting. Went over among the ledges, away from Brooks's, for Tige had a dreadful strong voice and could be heard as far as a cannon, and he was plaguy afraid Brooks would hear him. How Tige treed them on the oaks on the plain below the Cliffs. He could tell by his bark when he had treed one; he never told a lie. And so he got six or seven. How Tige told him from a distance that he had got one, but when he came up he could see nothing; but still he knew that Tige never told a lie, and at length he saw his head, in a crotch high up in the top of a very tall oak, and though he did n't expect to get him, he knocked him over.

Oct. 13. Drizzling, misty showers still, with a little misty sunshine at intervals. The trees have lost many of their leaves in the last twenty-four hours. The sun has got so low that it will do to let his rays in on the

earth; the cattle do not need their shade now, nor men. Warmth is more desirable now than shade.

The alert and energetic man leads a more intellectual life in winter than in summer. In summer the animal and vegetable in him are perfected as in a torrid zone; he lives in his senses mainly. In winter cold reason and not warm passion has her sway; he lives in thought and reflection; he lives a more spiritual, a less sensual, life. If he has passed a merely sensual summer, he passes his winter in a torpid state like some reptiles and other animals.

The mind of man in the two seasons is like the atmosphere of summer compared with the atmosphere of winter. He depends more on himself in winter, — on his own resources, — less on outward aid. Insects, it is true, disappear for the most part, and those animals which depend upon them; but the nobler animals abide with man the severity of winter. He migrates into his mind, to perpetual summer. And to the healthy man the winter of his discontent never comes.

Mr. Pratt told me that Jonas (?) Melvin found a honey-bees' nest lately near Beck Stow's swamp with twenty-five pounds of honey in it, in the top [of] a maple tree which was blown down. There is now a large swarm in the meeting-house chimney, in a flue not used. Many swarms have gone off that have not been heard from.

Oct. 14. Down the railroad before sunrise.

A freight-train in the Deep Cut. The sun rising over the woods. When the vapor from the engine rose above the woods, the level rays of the rising sun fell on it. It

presented the same redness, — morning red, — inclining to saffron, which the clouds in the eastern horizon do.

There was but little wind this morning, yet I heard the telegraph harp. It does not require a strong wind to wake its strings; it depends more on its direction and the tension of the wire apparently. A gentle but steady breeze will often call forth its finest strains, when a strong but unsteady gale, blowing at the wrong angle withal, fails to elicit any melodious sound.

In the psychological world there are phenomena analogous to what zoölogists call *alternate reproduction*, in which it requires several generations unlike each other to evolve the perfect animal. Some men's lives are but an aspiration, a yearning toward a higher state, and they are wholly misapprehended, until they are referred to, or traced through, all their metamorphoses. We cannot pronounce upon a man's intellectual and moral state until we foresee what metamorphosis it is preparing him for.

It is said that "the working bees . . . are barren females. The attributes of their sex . . . seem to consist only in their solicitude for the welfare of the new generation, of which they are the natural guardians, but not the parents." (Agassiz and Gould.[1]) This phenomenon is paralleled in man by maiden aunts and bachelor uncles, who perform a similar function.

"The muskrat," according to Agassiz and Gould, "is found from the mouth of Mackenzie's River to Florida." It is moreover of a type peculiar to temperate America. He is a native American surely. He neither dies of con-

[1] [*Principles of Zoölogy*, Boston, 1851.]

sumption in New England nor of fever and ague at the South and West. Thoroughly acclimated and naturalized.

"The hyenas, wild-boars, and rhinoceroses of the Cape of Good Hope have no analogues on the American continent." At the last menagerie I visited they told me that one of the hyenas came from South America!

There is something significant and interesting in the fact that the fauna of Europe and that of the United States are very similar, pointing to the fitness of this country for the settlement of Europeans.

They say, "There are . . . many species of animals whose numbers are daily diminishing, and whose extinction may be foreseen; as the Canada deer (Wapiti), the Ibex of the Alps, the Lämmergeyer, the bison, the beaver, the wild turkey, etc." With these, of course, is to be associated the Indian.

They say that the house-fly has followed man in his migrations.

One would say that the Yankee belonged properly to the *northern* temperate fauna, the region of the pines.

Oct. 15. *Wednesday.* 8.30 A. M. — Up the river in a boat to Pelham's Pond with W. E. C.

(But first a neighbor sent in a girl to inquire if I knew where worm-seed grew, otherwise called "Jerusalem-oak" (so said the recipe which she brought cut out of a newspaper), for her mistress's hen had the "gapes." But I answered that this was a Southern plant and [I] knew not where it was to be had. Referred her to the poultry book. Also the next proprietor commenced

stoning and settling down the stone for a new well, an operation which I wished to witness, purely beautiful, simple, and necessary. The stones laid on a wheel, and continually added to above as it is settled down by digging under the wheel. Also Goodwin, with a partridge and a stout mess of large pickerel, applied to me to dispose of a mud turtle which he had found moving the mud in a ditch. Some men will be in the way to see such movements.)

The muskrat-houses appear now for the most part to be finished. Some, it is true, are still rising. They line the river all the way. Some are as big as small haycocks. The river is still quite low, though a foot or more higher than when I was last on it. There is quite a wind, and the sky is full of flitting clouds, so that sky and water are quite unlike that warm, bright, transparent day when I last sailed on the river, when the surface was of such oily smoothness. You could not now study the river bottom for the black waves and the streaks of foam. When the sun shines brightest to-day, its pyramidal-shaped sheen (when for a short time we are looking up-stream, for we row) is dazzling and blinding. It is pleasant to hear the sound of the waves and feel the surging of the boat, — an inspiriting sound, as if you were bound on adventures. It is delightful to be tossed about in such a harmless storm, and see the waves look so angry and black. We see objects on shore — trees, etc., — much better from the boat, — from a low point of view. It brings them against the sky, into a novel point of view at least. The otherwise low on the meadows, as well as the hills, is conspicuous. I perceive that the bul-

rushes are nibbled along the shore, as if they had been cut by a scythe, yet in such positions as no mower could have reached, even outside the flags. Probably the muskrat was the mower, — for his houses. In this cool sunlight, Fair Haven Hill shows to advantage. Every rock and shrub and protuberance has justice done it, the sun shining at [an] angle on the hill and giving each a shadow. The hills have a hard and distinct outline, and I see into their very texture. On Fair Haven I see the sunlit light-green grass in the hollows where snow makes water sometimes, and on the russet slopes. Cut three white pine boughs opposite Fair Haven, and set them up in the bow of our boat for a sail. It was pleasant [to] hear the water begin to ripple under the prow, telling of our easy progress. We thus without a tack made the south side of Fair Haven, then threw our sails overboard, and the moment after mistook them for green bushes or weeds which had sprung from the bottom unusually far from shore. Then to hear the wind sough in your sail, — that is to be a sailor and hear a land sound. The grayish-whitish mikania, all fuzzy, covers the endless button-bushes, which are now bare of leaves. Observed the verification of the Scripture saying "as a dog returneth to his vomit." Our black pup, sole passenger in the stern, perhaps made seasick, vomited, then cleaned the boat again most faithfully and with a bright eye, licking his chops and looking round for more.

We comment on the boats of different patterns, — dories (?), punts, bread-troughs, flatirons, etc., etc., — which we pass, the prevailing our genuine dead-river boats, not to be matched by Boston carpenters. One

farmer blacksmith whom we know, whose boat we pass in Sudbury, has got a horseshoe nailed about the sculling-hole; — keeps off the witches too? The water carriages of various patterns and in various conditions, — some for pleasure (against the gentleman's seat?); some for ducking, small and portable; some for honest fishing, broad and leaky but not cranky; some with spearing fixtures; some stout and square-endish for hay boats; one canal-boat or mud-scow in the weeds, not worth getting down the stream, like some vast pike that could swallow all the rest, proper craft for our river.

In some places in the meadows opposite Bound Rock, the river seemed to have come to an end, it was so narrow suddenly. After getting in sight of Sherman's Bridge, counted nineteen birches on the right-hand shore in one whirl.

Now commenced the remarkable meandering of the river, so that we seemed for some [time] to be now running up, then running down parallel with a long, low hill, tacking over the meadow in spite of ourselves. Landed at Sherman's Bridge. An apple tree, made scrubby by being browsed by cows. Through what early hardships it may attain to bear a sweet fruit![1] No wonder it is prompted to grow thorns at last, to defend itself from such foes.[2] The pup nibbles clams, or plays with a bone no matter how dry. Thus the dog can be taken on a river voyage, but the cat cannot. She is too set in her ways. Now again for the Great Meadows. What meandering! The Serpentine, our river should be called.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 306; Riv. 376.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 304; Riv. 373.]

What makes the river love to delay here? Here come to study the law of meandering. We see the vast meadow studded with haycocks. We suspect that we have got to visit them all. It proves even so. Now we run down one haycock, now another. The distance made is frequently not more than a third the distance gone. Between Sherman's Bridge and Causeway Bridge is about a mile and three quarters in a straight line, but we judged that we went more than three miles. Here the "pipes" (at first) line the shore, and muskrat-houses still. A duck (a loon?) sails within gunshot, unwilling to fly; also a stake-driver (*Ardea minor*) rises with prominent breast or throat bone, as if badly loaded, his ship. Now no button-bushes line the stream, the changeable (?) stream; no rocks exist; the shores are lined with, first, in the water, still green polygonum, then wide fields of dead pontederia, then great bulrushes, then various reeds, sedges, or tall grasses, also dead thalictrum(?), — or is it cicuta? Just this side the causeway bridges a field, like a tall corn-field, of tall rustling reeds (?), ten feet high with broadish leaves and large, now seedy tufts, standing amid the button-bushes and great bulrushes.[1] I remember to have seen none elsewhere in this vicinity, unless at Fresh Pond, and there are they not straighter? Also, just beyond the bridges, very tall flags from six to eight feet high, leaves like the cat-tail but no tail. What are they?[2] We pass under two bridges above the Causeway Bridge. After passing under the first one of these two, — at the mouth of Larnum Brook, which is fed from Blandford's Pond,

[1] *Arundo Phragmites?* [2] Yes, a tall kind of cat-tail.

comes from Marlborough through Mill Village, and has a branch, Hop Brook, from south of Nobscot, — we see Nobscot, very handsome in a purplish atmosphere in the west, over a *very* deep meadow, which makes far up. A good way to skate to Nobscot, or within a mile or two. To see a distant hill from the surface of water over a low and very broad meadow, much better than to see it from another hill. This perhaps the most novel and so memorable prospect we got.

Walked across half a mile to Pelham's Pond, whose waves were dashing quite grandly. A house near, with two grand elms in front. I have seen other elms in Wayland. This pond a good point to skate to in winter, when it is easily accessible. Now we should have to draw our boat.

On the return, as in going, we expended nearly as much time and labor in counteracting the boat's tendency to whirl round, it is so miserably built. Now and then, — aye, aye, almost an everlasting *now*, — it will take the bits in its mouth and go round in spite of us, though we row on one side only, for the wind fills the after part of the boat, which is nearly out of water, and we therefore get along best and fastest when the wind is strong and dead ahead. That 's the kind of wind we advertise to race in. To row a boat thus all the day, with an hour's intermission, making fishes of ourselves as it were, putting on these long fins, realizing the finny life! Surely oars and paddles are but the fins which a man may use.

The very pads stand perpendicular (on their edges) before this wind, — which appears to have worked more to the north, — showing their red under sides. The

muskrats have exposed the clamshells to us in heaps all along the shore; else most [would] not know that a clam existed. If it were not for muskrats, how little would the fisherman see or know of fresh-water clamshells or clams! In the Great Meadows again the loon (?) rises, and again alights, and a heron (?) too flies sluggishly away, with vast wings, and small ducks which seem to have no tails, but their wings set quite aft. The crows ashore are making an ado, perchance about some carrion. We taste some swamp white oak acorns at the south end of Bound Rock Meadow.

The sun sets when we are off Israel Rice's. A few golden coppery clouds, intensely glowing, like fishes in some molten metal of the sky, and then the small scattered clouds grow blue-black above, or one half, and reddish or pink the other half, and after a short twilight the night sets in. We think it is pleasantest to be on the water at this hour. We row across Fair Haven in the thickening twilight and far below it, steadily and without speaking. As the night draws on her veil, the shores retreat; we only keep in the middle of this low stream of light; we know not whether we float in the air or in the lower regions. We seem to recede from the trees on shore or the island very slowly, and yet a few reaches make all our voyage. Nature has divided it agreeably into reaches. The reflections of the stars in the water are dim and elongated like the zodiacal light straight down into the depths, but no mist rises to-night. It is pleasant not to get home till after dark, — to steer by the lights of the villagers. The lamps in the houses twinkle now like stars; they shine doubly bright.

Rowed about twenty-four miles, going and coming. In a straight line it would be fifteen and one half.

Oct. 16. The new moon, seen by day, reminds me of a poet's cheese. Surveying for Loring to-day. Saw the Indian Ditch, so called. A plant newly leaving out, a shrub; looks somewhat like shad blossom. To-night the spearers are out again.

Oct. 17. Surveying for Loring. A severe frost this morning, which puts [us] one remove further from summer.

Oct. 19. The Indian (?) Ditch crosses the road beyond Loring's, running south seven and one half west, or within about two and a half degrees of the true meridian. According to Stephen Hosmer's plan of Thomas Jones's woodland, made in 1766, the ditch where Derby and Loring bound on it must be about eighty-four rods from old town line.

To the northern voyager who does not see the sun for three months, night is expanded into winter, and day into summer.

Observed to-day on the edge of a wood-lot of Loring's, where his shrub oaks bounded on a neighbor's small pitch pines, which grew very close together, that the line of separation was remarkably straight and distinct, neither a shrub oak nor a pine passing its limit, the ground where the pines grew having apparently been cultivated so far, and its edges defined by the plow.

A surveyor must be curious in studying the wounds of

trees, to distinguish a natural disease or scar from the "blazing" of an axe.

Has the aspen (?) poplar any more of a red heart than the other? The powder man does not want the red-hearted. Even this poor wood has its use.

Observed an oak, — a red or black, — at a pigeon-place, whose top limbs were cut off perhaps a month ago; the leaves had dried a sort of snuff-yellow and rather glossy.

Oct. 22. The pines, both white and pitch, have now shed their leaves, and the ground in the pine woods is strewn with the newly fallen needles. The fragrant life-everlasting is still fresh, and the Canada snapdragon still blooms bluely by the roadside. The rain and dampness have given birth to a new crop of mushrooms. The small willow-like shrub (sage willow (?), *Salix longirostris*, Mx.) is shedding its small leaves, which turn black in drying and cover the path.

Oct. 23. It is never too late to learn. I observed to-day the Irishman who helped me survey *twisting* the branch of a birch for a withe, and *before* he cut it off; and also, wishing to stick a tall, smooth pole in the ground, cut a notch in the side of it by which to drive it with a hatchet.

Oct. 26. I awoke this morning to infinite regret. In my dream I had been riding, but the horses bit each other and occasioned endless trouble and anxiety, and it was my employment to hold their heads apart. Next I sailed over the sea in a small vessel such as the North-

men used, as it were to the Bay of Fundy, and thence overland I sailed, still over the shallows about the sources of rivers toward the deeper *channel* of a stream which emptied into the Gulf beyond, — the Miramichi, was it? Again I was in my own small pleasure-boat, learning to sail on the sea, and I raised my sail before my anchor, which I dragged far into the sea. I saw the buttons which had come off the coats of drowned men, and suddenly I saw my dog — when I knew not that I had one — standing in the sea up to his chin, to warm his legs, which had been wet, which the cool wind numbed. And then I was walking in a meadow, where the dry season permitted me to walk further than usual, and there I met Mr. Alcott, and we fell to quoting and referring to grand and pleasing couplets and single lines which we had read in times past; and I quoted one which in my waking hours I have no knowledge of, but in my dream it was familiar enough. I only know that those which I quoted expressed regret, and were like the following, though they were not these, *viz.*: —

> "The short parenthesis of life was sweet,"
> "The remembrance of youth is a sigh," etc.

It had the word "memory" in it!! And then again the instant that I awoke, methought I was a musical instrument from which I heard a strain die out, — a bugle, or a clarionet, or a flute. My body was the organ and channel of melody, as a flute is of the music that is breathed through it. My flesh sounded and vibrated still to the strain, and my nerves were the chords of the lyre. I awoke, therefore, to an infinite regret, — to find myself, not the thoroughfare of glorious and world-

stirring inspirations, but a scuttle full of dirt, such a thoroughfare only as the street and the kennel, where, perchance, the wind may sometimes draw forth a strain of music from a straw.

I can partly account for this. Last evening I was reading Laing's account of the Northmen, and though I did not write in my Journal, I remember feeling a fertile regret, and deriving even an inexpressible satisfaction, as it were, from my ability to feel regret, which made that evening richer than those which had preceded it. I heard the last strain or flourish, as I woke, played on my body as the instrument. Such I knew I had been and might be again, and my regret arose from the consciousness how little like a musical instrument my body was now.

Oct. 27. This morning I wake and find it snowing and the ground covered with snow; quite unexpectedly, for last night it was rainy but not cold.

The obstacles which the heart meets with are like granite blocks which one alone cannot move. She who was as the morning light to me is now neither the morning star nor the evening star. We meet but to find each other further asunder, and the oftener we meet the more rapid our divergence. So a star of the first magnitude pales in the heavens, not from any fault in the observer's eye nor from any fault in itself, perchance, but because its progress in its own system has put a greater distance between.

The night is oracular. What have been the intimations of the night? I ask. How have you passed the night? Good-night!

My friend will be bold to conjecture; he will guess bravely at the significance of my words.

The cold numbs my fingers this morning. The strong northwest wind blows the damp snow along almost horizontally. The birds fly about as if seeking shelter.

Perhaps it was the young of the purple finch that I saw sliding down the grass stems some weeks ago; or was it the white-throated finch? [1]

Winter, with its *inwardness*, is upon us. A man is constrained to sit down, and to think.

The *Ardea minor* still with us. Saw a woodcock [2] feeding, probing the mud with its long bill, under the railroad bridge within two feet of me for a long time. Could not scare it far away. What a disproportionate length of bill! It is a sort of badge they [wear] as a punishment for greediness in a former state.

The highest arch of the stone bridge is six feet eight inches above the present surface of the water, which I should think was more than a foot higher than it has been this summer, and is four inches below the long stone in the east abutment.

Oct. 31. The wild apples are now getting palatable. I find a few left on distant trees, which the farmer thinks it not worth his while to gather. He thinks that he has better in his barrels, but he is mistaken, unless he has a walker's appetite and imagination, neither of which can he have.[3] These apples cannot be too knurly and rusty and crabbed (to look at). The knurliest will have some redeeming traits, even to the eyes.

[1] [See p. 29.] [2] Or snipe? [3] [*Excursions*, p. 308; Riv. 378.]

You will discover some evening redness dashed or sprinkled on some protuberance or in some cavity. It is rare that the summer lets an apple go without streaking or spotting it on some part of its sphere, though perchance one side may only seem to betray that it has once fallen in a brick-yard, and the other have been bespattered from a roily ink-bottle.[1] Some red stains it will have, commemorating the mornings and evenings it has witnessed ; some dark and rusty blotches, in memory of the clouds and foggy mildewy days that have passed over it; and a spacious field of green, reflecting the general face of nature, — green even as the fields; or yellowish ground, if it has a sunny flavor, — yellow as the harvests, or russet as the hills.[2] The saunterer's apple not even the saunterer can eat in the house.[3] The noblest of fruits is the apple. Let the most beautiful or swiftest have it.[4]

The robins now fly in flocks.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 314; Riv. 385, 386.]
[2] [*Excursions*, p. 314; Riv. 386.]
[3] [*Excursions*, p. 311; Riv. 382.]
[4] [*Excursions*, p. 297; Riv. 364, 365.]

II

NOVEMBER, 1851

(ÆT. 34)

Nov. 1. *Saturday.* R. W. E. says that Channing calls [ ][1] "seven feet of sandstone with a spoonful of wit."

It is a rare qualification to be able to state a fact simply and adequately, to digest some experience cleanly, to say "yes" and "no" with authority, to make a square edge, to conceive and suffer the truth to pass through us living and intact, even as a waterfowl an eel, as it flies over the meadows, thus stocking new waters. First of all a man must see, before he can say. Statements are made but partially. Things are said with reference to certain conventions or existing institutions, not absolutely. A fact truly and absolutely stated is taken out of the region of common sense and acquires a mythologic or universal significance. Say it and have done with it. Express it without expressing yourself. See not with the eye of science, which is barren, nor of youthful poetry, which is impotent. But taste the world and digest it. It would seem as if things got said but rarely and by chance. As you *see*, so at length will you *say*. When facts are seen superficially, they are seen as they lie in relation to certain institutions, perchance. But I would have them expressed as more deeply seen, with deeper

[1] [Name scratched out.]

references; so that the hearer or reader cannot recognize them or apprehend their significance from the platform of common life, but it will be necessary that he be in a sense translated in order to understand them; when the truth respecting his things shall naturally exhale from a man like the odor of the muskrat from the coat of the trapper. At first blush a man is not capable of reporting truth; he must be drenched and saturated with it first. What was *enthusiasm* in the young man must become *temperament* in the mature man. Without excitement, heat, or passion, he will survey the world which excited the youth and threw him off his balance. As all things are significant, so all words should be significant. It is a fault which attaches to the speaker, to speak flippantly or superficially of anything. Of what use are words which do not move the hearer, — are not oracular and fateful? A style in which the matter is all in all, and the manner nothing at all.

In your thoughts no more than in your walks do you meet men. In moods I find such privacy as in dismal swamps and on mountain-tops.

Man recognizes laws little enforced, and he condescends to obey them. In the moment that he feels his superiority to them as compulsatory, he, as it were, courteously reënacts them but to obey them.

This on my way to Conantum, 2.30 P. M. It is a bright, clear, warm November day. I feel blessed. I love my life. I warm toward all nature. The woods are now much more open than when I last observed them; the leaves have fallen, and they let in light, and I see the sky through them as through a crow's wing in every direction. For

the most part only the pines and oaks (white?) retain their leaves. At a distance, accordingly, the forest is green and reddish. The crickets now sound faintly and from very deep in the sod.

Minott says that G. M. Barrett told him that Amos Baker told him that during Concord Fight he went over behind the hill to the old Whittaker place (Sam Buttrick's) and stayed. Yet he was described as the only survivor of Concord Fight. Received a pension for running away?

Fall dandelions look bright still. The grass has got a new greenness in spots. At this season there are stranger sparrows or finches about. The skunk-cabbage is already pushing up again. The alders have lost their leaves, and the willows except a few shrivelled ones.

It is a remarkable day for fine gossamer cobwebs. Here in the causeway, as I walk toward the sun, I perceive that the air is full of them streaming from off the willows and spanning the road, all stretching across the road, and yet I cannot see them in any other direction, and feel not one. It looks as if the birds would be incommoded. They have the effect of a shimmer in the air. This shimmer, moving along them as they are waved by the wind, gives the effect of a drifting storm of light. It is more like a fine snow-storm which drifts athwart your path than anything else. What is the peculiar condition of the atmosphere, to call forth this activity? If there were no sunshine, I should never find out that they existed, I should not know that I was bursting a myriad barriers. Though you break them

with your person, you feel not one. Why should this day be so distinguished?

The rain of night before last has raised the river at least two feet, and the meadows wear a late-fall look. The naked and weedy stems of the button-bush are suddenly submerged; you no longer look for pickerel from the bridges. The shallow and shrunken shore is also submerged. I see so far and distinctly, my eyes seem to slide in this clear air. The river is peculiarly sky-blue to-day, not dark as usual. It is all in the air. The cinquefoil on Conantum. Counted one hundred and twenty-five crows in one straggling flock moving westward. The red shrub oak leaves abide on the hills. The witch-hazels have mostly lost their blossoms, perhaps on account of the snow. The ground wears its red carpet under the pines. The pitch pines show new buds at the end of their plumes. How long this?

Saw a canoe birch by road beyond the Abel Minott house; distinguished it thirty rods off by the chalky whiteness of its limbs. It is of a more unspotted, transparent, and perhaps pinkish white than the common, has considerable branches as well as white ones, and its branches do not droop and curl downward like that. There will be some loose curls of bark about it. The common birch is *finely* branched and has frequently a *snarly* head; the former is a more open and free-growing tree. If at a distance you see the birch near its top forking into two or more white limbs, you may know it for a canoe birch. You can tell where it has grown after the wood has turned to mould by a small fragment of its bark still left, — if it divides readily. The common

birch is more covered with moss, has the aspect of having grown more slowly, and has many more branches. I have heard of a man in Maine who copied the whole Bible on to birch bark. It was so much easier than to write that sentence which the birch tree stands for.

Nov. 2. *Sunday.* The muskrat-houses are mostly covered by the rise of the river! — not a very unexpected one either. Old wells as well as walls must be among the oldest monuments of civilized man here. How old may be the most ancient well which men use to-day. Saw a canoe birch beyond Nawshawtuct, growing out of the middle of a white pine stump, which still showed the mark of the axe, sixteen inches in diameter at its bottom, or two feet from the ground, or where it had first taken root on the stump.

Nov. 4. To Saw Mill Brook by Turnpike; return by Walden.

I see why the checkerberry was so called, — *Mitchella repens* (we call it falsely partridge-berry), — for its leaves, variegated, *checker* the ground, now mingled with red berries and partially covered with the fallen leaves of the forest.

Saw Mill Brook is peculiar among our brooks as a mountain brook. For a short distance it reminds me of runs I have seen in New Hampshire. A brawling little stream tumbling through a rocky wood, ever down and down. Where the wood has been cleared, it is almost covered with the rubbish which the woodchoppers have left, the fine tree-tops, which no one cared to make into

fagots. It was quite a discovery when I first came upon this brawling mountain stream in Concord woods. Rising out of an obscure meadow in the woods, for some fifty or sixty rods of its course it is a brawling mountain stream in our quiet Concord woods, as much obstructed by rocks — rocks out of all proportion to its tiny stream — as a brook can well be. And the rocks are bared throughout the wood on either side, as if a torrent had anciently swept through here; so unlike the after character of the stream. Who would have thought that, on tracing it up from where it empties into the larger Mill Brook in the open peat meadows, it would conduct him to such a headlong and impetuous youth. Perchance it should be called a "force." [1] It suggests what various moods may attach to the same character. Ah, if I but knew that some minds which flow so muddily in the low-land portion of their course, when they cross the high-ways, tumbled thus impetuously and musically, mixed themselves with the air in foam, but a little way back in the woods! that these dark and muddy pools, where only the pout and the leech are to be found, issued from pure trout streams higher up! that the man's thoughts ever flowed as sparkling mountain water, that trout there loved to glance through his dimples, where the witch-hazel hangs over his stream!

This stream is here sometimes quite lost amid the rocks, which appear as if they had been arched over it, but which, in fact, it has undermined and found its way beneath, and they have merely fallen together archwise, as they were undermined.

[1] No, a force is a fall.

It is truly a raw and gusty day, and I hear a tree creak sharply like a bird, a phœbe. The hypericums stand red or lake over the brook. The jays with their scream are at home in the scenery. I see where trees have spread themselves over the rocks in a scanty covering of soil, been undermined by the brook, then blown over and, as they fell, lifted and carried over with them all the soil, together with considerable rocks. So from time to time, by these natural levers, rocks are removed from the middle of the stream to the shore. The slender chestnuts, maples, elms, and white ash trees, which last are uncommonly numerous here, are now all bare of leaves, and a few small hemlocks, with their now thin but unmixed and fresh green foliage, stand over and cheer the stream and remind me of winter, the snows which are to come and drape them and contrast with their green, and the chickadees that are to flit and lisp amid them.

Ah, the beautiful tree, the hemlock, with its green canopy, under which little grows, not exciting the cupidity of the carpenter, whose use most men have not discovered! I know of some memorable ones worth walking many miles to see. These little cheerful hemlocks, — the lisp of chickadees seems to come from them now, — each standing with its foot on the very edge of the stream, reaching sometimes part way over its channel, and here and there one has lightly stepped across. These evergreens are plainly as much for shelter for the birds as for anything else. The fallen leaves are so thick they almost fill the bed of the stream and choke it. I hear the runnel gurgling underground. As if this puny rill had ever tossed these rocks about! these storied rocks with their

fine lichens and sometimes red stains as of Indian blood on them! There are a few bright-green ferns lying flat by the sides of the brook, but it is cold, cold, withering to all else. A whitish lichen on the witch-hazel rings it here. I glimpse the frizzled tail of a red squirrel with a chestnut in its mouth on a white pine.

The ants appear to be gone into winter quarters. Here are two bushels of fine gravel, piled up in a cone, overpowering the grass, which tells of a corresponding cavity.

Nov. 6. I had on my "bad-weather clothes" at Quebec like Olaf Trygvesson, the Northman, when he went to Thing in England.[1]

Nov. 7. 8 A. M. — To Long Pond with W. E. C.

[Four fifths of a page missing.]

From there we looked over the lower land and westward to the Jenkins house and Wachusett; the latter to-day a very faint blue, almost lost in the atmosphere. Entering Wayland, the sluggish country town, C. remarked that we might take the town if we had a couple of oyster-knives. We marvelled as usual at the queer-looking building which C. thought must be an engine-house, but which a boy told us was occupied as a shoemaker's shop but was built for a library. C. was much amused here by a bigger schoolboy whom we saw on the common, one of those who stretch themselves on the back seats and can chew up a whole newspaper into a spitball to plaster the wall with when the master's back

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 28; Riv. 34.]

is turned; made considerable fun of him, and thought this the *event* of Wayland. Soon got into a country new to us, in Wayland, opposite to Pelham or Heard's Pond, going across lots. Cedar hills and valleys near the river. A well-placed farmhouse with great old chestnuts near it, the greatest collection of large chestnuts which I remember to have seen. It is a tree full and well outlined at top, being bushy with short twigs at top, — a firm outline. Some long, moraine-like hills covered with cedars, with the hill country of Wayland on our left. The white oaks still thick with leaves turned pinkish? From a pretty high hill on the left of the road, after passing a very large field which was being plowed, a glorious view of the meadows and Nobscot, now red or purplish with its shrub oaks in this air; and Wachusett here seen in perfection, and Dudley Pond first seen on the south.

Dudley Pond is revealed due south now at noon (twelve), by its sparkling water, on both sides its promontory. The sparkles are even like fireflies in a meadow. This is not far above the opening to Pelham Pond, which also we fairly see. The white pines now look uncommonly soft. Their foliage, indeed, is not so thick as it was, but, the old leaves being fallen, and none left which are a year old, it is perchance more bright and fair. Dudley Pond, beyond the promontory, appears to be revealed by such a mirage as the coin in a basin. The sun-sparkles seen through the leafless woods on both sides this promontory, over its neck, are very large and innumerable; when one goes out, up flashes another, like a meadow full of fireflies, — dancing sparkles. When we reach the pond we find much beech wood just

cut down, last winter, and still standing on its shores. Where young beeches have been cut off four feet from the ground, to cord the wood against, I see that they have put out sprouts this summer in a dense bunch at its top; and also all those stumps which are clothed with short sprouts still covered with curled and crisped leaves are beeches. These large sparkles are magic lanterns by daylight. It is the game of "Go away Jack, come again Gill," played by the Genius of the lake, with the sun on his nail instead of a piece of paper, to amuse Nature's children with. Should it not be called Sparkle Pond? Buttonwood trees are frequent about its shores, its handsome hilly shores. This side, cedars also, on its pleasant hilly shores; and opposite, dark, dense hemlocks. Thus, in the form of its shores and, above all, in the trees which prevail about it, it is peculiar or at least wilder than the Concord ponds, and is exceedingly handsome. It has, perhaps, greater variety than any pond I know. Let it be called Peninsula Pond, nevertheless. The willow herb is there abundant, with its arching stem and its calices, or dried flowers, still attached. No tree has so fair a bole and so handsome an *instep* as the beech. The lower leaves, which are an orange (?) red, hang on (dry) while the rest of the tree is bare. Chased by an ox, whom we escaped over a fence while he gored the trees instead of us, — the first time I was ever chased by his kind. It is a clear water without weeds. There is a handsomely sloping grassy shore on the west.

Close by we found Long Pond, in Wayland, Framingham, and Natick, a great body of water with singularly sandy, shelving, caving, undermined banks; and there we

ate our luncheon. The mayflower leaves we saw there, and the *Viola pedata* in blossom. We went down it a mile or two on the east side through the woods on its high bank, and then dined, looking far down to what seemed the Boston outlet (opposite to its natural outlet), where a solitary building stood on the shore. It is a wild and stretching loch, where yachts might sail, — Cochituate. It was not only larger but wilder and more novel than I had expected. In some respects unlike New England. I could hardly have told in what part of the world I was, if I had been carried there blindfolded. Yet some features, at least the composition of the soil, were familiar. The glorious sandy banks far and near, caving and sliding, — far sandy slopes, the forts of the land, — where you see the naked flesh of New England, her garment being blown aside like that of the priests (of the Levites?) when they ascend to the altar. Seen through this November sky, these sands are dear to me, worth all the gold of California, suggesting Pactolus, while the Saxonville factory-bell sounds o'er the woods. That sound perchance it is that whets my vision. The shore suggests the seashore, and two objects at a distance near the shore look like seals on a sand-bar. Dear to me to lie in, this sand; fit to preserve the bones of a race for thousands of years to come. And this is my home, my native soil; and I am a New-Englander. Of thee, O earth, are my bone and sinew made; to thee, O sun, am I brother. It must be the largest lake in Middlesex. To this dust my body will gladly return as to its origin. Here have I my habitat. I am of thee.

Returned by the south side of Dudley Pond, which looked fairer than ever, though smaller, — now so still, the afternoon somewhat advanced, Nobscot in the west in a purplish light, and the scalloped peninsula before us. When we held our heads down, this was thrown far off. This shore was crowded with hemlocks, which elsewhere I do not remember to have seen so numerous. Outside the wood there are little rounded clumps of smaller ones about. This pond must have been dear to the Indians.

At Nonesuch Pond, in Natick, we saw a boulder some thirty-two feet square by sixteen high, with a large rock leaning against it, — under which we walked, — forming a triangular frame, through which we beheld the picture of the pond. How many white men and Indians have passed under it! Boulder Pond! Thence across lots by the Weston elm, to the bounds of Lincoln at the railroad. Saw a delicate fringed purple flower, *Gentiana crinita*, between those Weston hills, in a meadow, and after on higher land.

C. kept up an incessant strain of wit, banter, about my legs, which were so springy and unweariable, declared I had got my double legs on, that they were not cork but steel, that I should let myself to Van Amburgh, should have sent them to the World's Fair, etc., etc.; wanted to know if I could not carry my father Anchises.

The sun sets while we are perched on a high rock in the north of Weston. It soon grows finger cold. At Walden are three reflections of the bright full (or nearly) moon, one moon and two sheens further off.

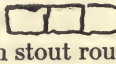
Nov. 8. The dark spruce tree at Sherman's; its vicinity the site for a house.

Ah, those sun-sparkles on Dudley Pond in this November air! what a heaven to live in! Intensely brilliant, as no artificial light I have seen, like a dance of diamonds. Coarse mazes of a diamond dance seen through the trees. All objects shine to-day, even the sportsmen seen at a distance, as if a cavern were unroofed, and its crystals gave entertainment to the sun. This great see-saw of brilliants, the *ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα*. You look several inches into the sod. The cedarn hills. The squirrels that run across the road sport their tails like banners. The gray squirrels in their cylinders are set out in the sun. When I saw the bare sand at Cochituate I felt my relation to the soil. These are *my* sands not yet run out. Not yet will the fates turn the glass. This air have I title to taint with my decay. In this clean sand my bones will gladly lie. Like *Viola pedata*, I shall be ready to bloom again here in my Indian summer days. Here ever springing, never dying, with perennial root I stand; for the winter of the land is warm to me. While the flowers bloom again as in the spring, shall I pine? When I see her sands exposed, thrown up from beneath the surface, it touches me inwardly, it reminds me of my origin; for I am such a plant, so native to New England, methinks, as springs from the sand cast up from below.

4 P. M. — I find ice under the north side of woods nearly an inch thick, where the acorns are frozen in, which have dropped from the overhanging oaks and been saved from the squirrels, perchance by the water.[1] W. E. C.

[1] Must be rotten if they float.

says he found a ripe strawberry last week in Berkshire. Saw a frog at the Swamp Bridge on back road.

Nov. 9. The boat which we paddled that elysian day, Oct. 7th, was made of three distinct boxes shaped like bread-troughs, excepting the bow piece, which was rounded,  fastened together by screws and nuts, with stout round leather handles by which to carry the separate parts. It was made of the thinnest and lightest material, without seats or thole-pins, for portability. So that three passengers could sit in three different boats which, by turning the hand-nuts(?), they might separate and steer different ways.

The river has fallen more than a foot since I last observed it.[1] I see minute yellow cocoons on the grass, as I go across the field behind Dennis's, reminding me of some late flower, as the cinquefoil. What is the insect? I hear a cricket singing the requiem of the year under the Clamshell Bank. Soon all will be frozen up, and I shall hear no cricket chirp in the land. The very rabbit-forms and squirrel-holes will be snowed up, and walking in the winter days, in the sunny forenoons after a light snow has fallen in the night, covering up the old snow, already deep, and [when] the gentle wind from time to time shakes down a golden dust from above, I shall see still the gray squirrel or the red, still cheery and lifesome, making tiny tracks over the snow-covered rails and riders, when the sun shines aslant between the stems of the pines.

In our walks C. takes out his note-book sometimes

[1] *Vide* Oct. 27.

and tries to write as I do, but all in vain. He soon puts it up again, or contents himself with scrawling some sketch of the landscape. Observing me still scribbling, he will say that he confines himself to the ideal, purely ideal remarks; he leaves the facts to me. Sometimes, too, he will say a little petulantly, "*I* am universal; I have nothing to do with the particular and definite."[1] He is the moodiest person, perhaps, that I ever saw. As naturally whimsical as a cow is brindled, both in his tenderness and his roughness he belies himself. He can be incredibly selfish and unexpectedly generous. He is conceited, and yet there is in him far more than usual to ground conceit upon.[2]

I, too, would fain set down something beside facts. Facts should only be as the frame to my pictures; they should be material to the mythology which I am writing; not facts to assist men to make money, farmers to farm profitably, in any common sense; facts to tell who I am, and where I have been or what I have thought: as now the bell rings for evening meeting, and its volumes of sound, like smoke which rises from where a cannon is fired, make the tent in which I dwell. My facts shall be falsehoods to the common sense. I would so state facts that they shall be significant, shall be myths or mythologic. Facts which the mind perceived, thoughts which the body thought, — with these I deal. I, too, cherish vague and misty forms, vaguest when the cloud at which I gaze is dissipated quite and naught but the skyey depths are seen.

James P. Brown's retired pond, now shallow and

[1] [Channing, p. 66.] [2] [Channing, p. 332.]

more than half dried up, seems far away and rarely visited, known to few, though not far off. It is encircled by an amphitheatre of low hills, on two opposite sides covered with high pine woods, the other sides with young white oaks and white pines respectively. I am affected by beholding there reflected this gray day, so unpretendingly, the gray stems of the pine wood on the hillside and the sky, — that mirror, as it were a permanent picture to be seen there, a permanent piece of idealism. What were these reflections to the cows alone! Were these things made for cows' eyes mainly? You shall go over behind the hills, where you would suppose that otherwise there was no eye to behold, and find this piece of magic a constant phenomenon there. It is not merely a few favored lakes or pools that reflect the trees and skies, but the obscurest pond-hole in the most unfrequented dell does the same.

These reflections suggest that the sky underlies the hills as well as overlies them, and in another sense than in appearance. I am a little surprised on beholding this reflection, which I did not perceive for some minutes after looking into the pond, as if I had not regarded this as a constant phenomenon. What has become of Nature's common sense and love of facts, when in the very mud-puddles she reflects the skies and trees? Does that procedure recommend itself entirely to the common sense of men? Is that the way the *New England Farmer* would have arranged it?

I think it is not true, what De Quincey says of himself, that he read Greek as easily and copiously as other men do French; for as murder will out, so will a man's read-

ing, and in this author's writings the amount of reference to Greek literature does not at all correspond to such a statement.

I knew that this pond was early to freeze; I had forgotten that it reflected the hills around it. So retired! which I must think even the sordid owner does not know that he owns. It is full of little pollywogs now. Pray, when were they born?

To-day the mountains seen from the pasture above are dark blue, so dark that they look like new mountains and make a new impression, and the intervening town of Acton is seen against them in a new relation, a new neighborhood.

The new monument in Acton, rising by the side of its mountain houses, like a tall and slender chimney, looking black against the sky! I cannot associate that tall and slender column, or any column in fact, with the death of Davis and Hosmer, and Concord Fight, and the American Revolution. It should have been a large, flat stone rather, covered with lichens like an old farmer's door-step, which it took all the oxen in the town to draw. Such a column this as might fitly stand perchance in Abyssinia or Nubia, but not here in Middlesex County, where the genius of the people does not soar after that fashion. It is the Acton flue, to carry off the vapors of patriotism into the upper air, which, confined, would be deleterious to animal and vegetable health. The Davis and Hosmer Monument might have been a door-step to the Town House, and so the Concord Monument.

Pitch pine cones very beautiful, not only the fresh leather-colored ones but especially the dead gray ones

covered with lichens, the scales so regular and close, like an impenetrable coat of mail. These are very handsome to my eye; also those which have long since opened regularly and shed their seeds.

An abundance of the rattlesnake plantain in the woods by Brown's Pond, now full of a fine chaffy seed (?).

Now the leaves are gone the birds' nests are revealed, the brood being fledged and flown. There is a perfect adaptation in the material used in constructing a nest. There is one which I took from a maple on the causeway at Hubbard's Bridge. It is fastened to the twigs by white woolen strings (out of a shawl?), which it has picked up in the road, though it is more than half a mile from a house; and the sharp eyes of the bird have discovered plenty of horsehairs out of the tail or mane, with which to give it form by their spring; with fine meadow hay for body, and the reddish woolly material which invests the ferns in the spring (apparently) for lining.

Nov. 10. This morning the ground is once more whitened with snow, but it will apparently be gone in an hour or two. I live where the *Pinus rigida* grows, with its firm cones, almost as hard as iron, armed with recurved spines.

In relation to politics, to society, aye, to the whole outward world, I am tempted to ask, Why do *they* lay such stress on a particular experience which you have had? — that, after twenty-five years, you should meet Cyrus Warren again on the sidewalk! Have n't I budged an inch, then? This daily routine should go on, then, like

those — it must be conceded — vital functions of digestion, circulation of the blood, etc., which in health we know nothing about. A wise man is as unconscious of the movements in the body politic as he is of the process of digestion and the circulation of the blood in the natural body. These processes are *infra*-human. I sometimes awake to a half-consciousness of these things going on about me, — as politics, society, business, etc., etc., — as a man may become conscious of some of the processes of digestion, in a morbid state, and so have the dyspepsia, as it is called. It appears to me that those things which most engage the attention of men, as politics, for instance, are vital functions of human society, it is true, but should [be] unconsciously performed, like the vital functions of the natural body. It is as if a thinker submitted himself to be rasped by the great gizzard of creation. Politics is, as it were, the gizzard of society, full of grit and gravel, and the two political parties are its two opposite halves, which grind on each other. Not only individuals but states have thus a confirmed dyspepsia, which expresses itself, you can imagine by what sort of eloquence. Our life is not altogether a forgetting, but also, alas, to a great extent a remembering, of that which perchance we should never have been conscious of, — the consciousness of what should not be permitted to disturb a man's waking hours. As for society, why should we not meet, not always as dyspeptics, but sometimes as eupeptics?[1]

No true and absolute account of things, — of the evening and the morning and all the phenomena between

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 472, 481, 482; *Misc.*, Riv. 274, 286, 287.]

them, — but ever a petty reference to man, to society, aye, often to Christianity. What these things are when men are asleep. I come from the funeral of mankind to attend to a natural phenomenon. The so much grander significance of any fact — of sun and moon and stars — when not referred to man and his needs but viewed absolutely! Sounds that are wafted from over the confines of time.

Nov. 11. When, pointing toward Cap Tourmente, I asked the name of a *habitant* whom we met, he hazarded [?] the name of Belange, or fair angel, — or perchance he referred to some other sort. At any rate, my interrogations of this nature gave vent to such a musical catalogue of sweet names — though I did not know which one to fix on — that I continued to put them to every *habitant* I met, if only for this pleasure.

Living much out-of-doors in the air, in the sun and wind, will, no doubt, produce a certain roughness of character, will cause a thicker cuticle to grow over some of the finer sensibilities of a man's nature, as on his face and hands, or those parts of his body which are exposed to the weather; as staying in the house, on the other hand, may produce a softness and smoothness, not to say thinness, of skin, accompanied by an increased sensibility to certain impressions. And no doubt it is a nice matter to proportion rightly the thick and thin skin. Perhaps we should be more susceptible to some influences important to our intellectual growth, if the sun had shone and the wind blown on us a little less. As too much manual labor callouses the hand and deprives

it of the exquisiteness of the touch. But then methinks that is a scurf that will fall off fast enough, — that the natural remedy is to be found in the proportion which the night bears to the day, the winter to the summer, etc., thought to experience.[1]

2 P. M. — A bright, but cold day, finger-cold. One must next wear gloves, put his hands in winter quarters. There is a cold, silvery light on the white pines as I go through J. P. Brown's field near Jenny Dugan's. I am glad of the shelter of the thick pine wood on the Marlborough road, on the plain. The roar of the wind over the pines sounds like the surf on countless beaches, an endless shore; and at intervals it sounds like a gong resounding through halls and entries, *i. e.* there is a certain resounding woodiness in the tone. How the wind roars among the shrouds of the wood! The sky looks mild and fair enough from this shelter. Every withered blade of grass and every dry weed, as well as pine-needle, reflects light. The lately dark woods are open and light; the sun shines in upon the stems of trees which it has not shone on since spring. Around the edges of ponds the weeds are dead, and there, too, the light penetrates. The atmosphere is less moist and gross, and light is universally dispersed. We are greatly indebted to these transition seasons or states of the atmosphere, which show us thus phenomena which belong not to the summer or the winter of any climate. The brilliancy of the autumn is wonderful, this flashing brilliancy, as if the atmosphere were phosphoric.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 210; Riv. 257.]

When I have been confined to my chamber for the greater part of several days by some employment, or perchance by the ague, till I felt weary and house-worn, I have been conscious of a certain softness to which I am otherwise and commonly a stranger, in which the gates were loosened to some emotions; and if I were to become a confirmed invalid, I see how some sympathy with mankind and society might spring up. Yet what is my softness good for, even to tears. It is not I, but nature in me. I laughed at myself the other day to think that I cried while reading a pathetic story. I was no more affected in spirit than I frequently am, methinks. The tears were merely a phenomenon of the bowels, and I felt that that expression of my sympathy, so unusual with me, was something mean, and such as I should be ashamed to have the subject of it understand. I had a cold in my head withal, about those days. I found that I had some bowels, but then it was because my bowels were out of order.

The *fall* of the year is over, and now let us see if we shall have any Indian summer.

White Pond is prepared for winter. Now that most other trees have lost their leaves, the evergreens are more conspicuous about its shores and on its capes. The view of the southern horizon from the lane this side still attracts me, but not so much as before I had explored those Wayland hills, which look so much fairer, perhaps, than they are. To-day you may write a chapter on the advantages of travelling, and to-morrow you may write another chapter on the advantages of not travelling. The horizon has one kind of beauty and attraction to him

who has never explored the hills and mountains in it, and another, I fear a less ethereal and glorious one, to him who has. That blue mountain in the horizon is certainly the most heavenly, the most elysian, which we have not climbed, on which we have not camped for a night. But only our horizon is moved thus further off, and if our whole life should prove thus a failure, the future which is to atone for all, where still there must be some success, will be more glorious still.

"Says I to myself" should be the motto of my journal.

It is fatal to the writer to be too much possessed by his thought. Things must lie a little remote to be described.

Nov. 12. Write often, write upon a thousand themes, rather than long at a time, not trying to turn too many feeble somersets in the air, — and so come down upon your head at last. Antæus-like, be not long absent from the ground. Those sentences are good and well discharged which are like so many little resiliencies from the spring floor of our life, — a distinct fruit and kernel itself, springing from terra firma. Let there be as many distinct plants as the soil and the light can sustain. Take as many bounds in a day as possible. Sentences uttered with your back to the wall. Those are the admirable bounds when the performer has lately touched the springboard. A good bound into the air from the air [*sic*] is a good and wholesome experience, but what shall we say to a man's leaping off precipices in the attempt to fly? He comes down like lead. In the meanwhile, you have got your feet planted upon the rock, with the rock also

at your back, and, as in the case of King James and Roderick Dhu, can say, —

> "Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
> From its firm base as soon as I."

Such, uttered or not, is the strength of your sentence. Sentences in which there is no strain. A fluttering and inconstant and *quasi* inspiration, and ever memorable Icarian fall, in which your helpless wings are expanded merely by your swift descent into the *pelagos* beneath.

C. is one who will not stoop to rise (to change the subject). He wants something for which he will not pay the going price. He will only learn slowly by failure, — not a noble, but disgraceful, failure.[1] This is not a noble method of learning, to be educated by inevitable suffering, like De Quincey, for instance. Better dive like a muskrat into the mud, and pile up a few weeds to sit on during the floods, a foundation of your own laying, a house of your own building, however cold and cheerless.

Methinks the hawk that soars so loftily and circles so steadily and apparently without effort has earned this power by faithfully creeping on the ground as a reptile in a former state of existence. You must creep before you can run; you must run before you can fly. Better one effective bound upward with elastic limbs from the valley than a jumping from the mountain-tops in the attempt to fly. The observatories are not built high but deep; the foundation is equal to the superstructure. It is more important to a distinct vision that it be steady than that it be from an elevated point of view.

Walking through Ebby Hubbard's wood this after-

[1] [Channing, pp. 332, 333.]

noon, with Minott, who was actually taking a walk for amusement and exercise, he said, on seeing some white pines blown down, that you might know that ground had been cultivated, by the trees being torn up so, for otherwise they would have rooted themselves more strongly. Saw some very handsome canoe birches there, the largest I know, a foot in diameter and forty or fifty feet high. The large ones have a reddish cast, perhaps from some small lichen. Their fringes and curls give them an agreeable appearance. Observed a peculiarity in some white oaks. Though they had a firm and close bark near the ground, the bark was very coarse and scaly, in loose flakes, above. Much coarser than the swamp white oak. Minott has a story for every woodland path. He has hunted in them all. Where we walked last, he had once caught a partridge by the *wing!*

7 P. M. — To Conantum.

A still, cold night. The light of the rising moon in the east. Moonrise is a faint sunrise. And what shall we name the faint aurora that precedes the moonrise? The ground is frozen and echoes to my tread. There are absolutely no crickets to be heard now. They are heard, then, till the ground freezes. To-day I heard for the first time this season the crackling, vibrating sound which resounds from thin ice when a stone is cast upon it. So far have we got toward winter. It is doubtful if they who have not pulled their turnips will have a chance to get them. It is not of much use to drive the cows to pasture. I can fancy that I hear the booming of ice in the ponds. I hear no sound of any bird now at night, but sometimes

some creature stirring, — a rabbit, or skunk, or fox, — betrayed now by the dry leaves which lie so thick and light. The openness of the leafless woods is particularly apparent now by moonlight; they are nearly as bright as the open field. It is worth the while always to go to the waterside when there is but little light in the heavens and see the heavens and the stars reflected. There is double the light that there is elsewhere, and the reflection has the force of a great silent companion. There is no fog now o' nights. I thought to-night that I saw glow-worms in the grass, on the side of the hill; was almost certain of it, and tried to lay my hand on them, but found it was the moonlight reflected from (apparently) the fine frost crystals on the withered grass, and they were so fine that they went and came like glow-worms. It had precisely the effect of twinkling glow-worms. They gleamed just long enough for glow-worms.

Nov. 13. To Fair Haven Hill.

A cold and dark afternoon, the sun being behind clouds in the west. The landscape is barren of objects, the trees being leafless, and so little light in the sky for variety. Such a day as will almost oblige a man to eat his own heart. A day in which you must hold on to life by your teeth. You can hardly ruck up any skin on Nature's bones. The sap is down; she won't peel. Now is the time to cut timber for yokes and ox-bows, leaving the tough bark on, — yokes for your own neck. Finding yourself yoked to Matter and to Time. Truly a hard day, hard times these! Not a mosquito left. Not an insect to hum. Crickets gone into winter quarters. Friends

long since gone there, and you left to walk on frozen ground, with your hands in your pockets. Ah, but is not this a glorious time for your deep inward fires? And will not your green hickory and white oak burn clear in this frosty air? Now is not your manhood taxed by the great Assessor? Taxed for having a soul, a ratable soul. A day when you cannot pluck a flower, cannot dig a parsnip, nor pull a turnip, for the frozen ground! What do the thoughts find to live on? What avails you now the fire you stole from heaven? Does not each thought become a vulture to gnaw your vitals? No Indian summer have we had this November. I see but few traces of the perennial spring. Now is there nothing, not even the cold beauty of ice crystals and snowy architecture, nothing but the echo of your steps over the frozen ground, no voice of birds nor frogs. You are dry as a farrow cow. The earth will not admit a spade. All fields lie fallow. Shall not your mind? True, the freezing ground is being prepared for immeasurable snows, but there are brave thoughts within you that shall remain to rustle the winter through like white oak leaves upon your boughs, or like scrub oaks that remind the traveller of a fire upon the hillsides; or evergreen thoughts, cold even in midsummer, by their nature shall contrast the more fairly with the snow. Some warm springs shall still tinkle and fume, and send their column of vapor to the skies.

The walker now fares like cows in the pastures, where is no grass but hay; he gets nothing but an appetite. If we must return to hay, pray let us have that which has been stored in barns, which has not lost its sweetness. The poet needs to have more stomachs than the cow,

for for him no fodder is stored in barns. He relies upon his instinct, which teaches him to paw away the snow to come at the withered grass.

Methinks man came very near being made a dormant creature, just as some of these animals. The ground squirrel, for instance, which lays up vast stores, is yet found to be half dormant, if you dig him out. Now for the oily nuts of thought which you have stored up.

The mountains are of an uncommonly dark blue to-day. Perhaps this is owing, not only to the greater clearness of the atmosphere, which brings them nearer, but to the absence of the leaves! They are many miles nearer for it. A little mistiness occasioned by warmth would set them further off and make them fainter.

I see snow on the Peterboro hills, reflecting the sun. It is pleasant thus to look from afar into winter. We look at a condition which we have not reached. Notwithstanding the poverty of the immediate landscape, in the horizon it is simplicity and grandeur. I look into valleys white with snow and now lit up by the sun, while all this country is in shade. This accounts for the cold northwest wind.

There is a great gap in the mountain range just south of the two Peterboro hills. Methinks I have been through it, and that a road runs there. At any rate, humble as these mountains are compared with some, yet at this distance I am convinced that they answer the purpose of Andes; and, seen in the horizon, I know of nothing more grand and stupendous than this great mountain gate or pass, a great cleft or sinus in the blue banks, as in a dark evening cloud, fit portal to lead

from one country, from one quarter of the earth, to another, where the children of the Israelites may file through. Little does the New Hampshire farmer who drives over that road realize through what a sublime gap he is passing. You would almost as soon think of a road to wind through and over a dark evening cloud. This prospect of the mountains from our low hills is what I would rather have than pastures on the mountain-sides such as my neighbors own, aye, than townships at their base. Instead that I drive my cattle up in May, I turn my eyes that way. My eyes pasture there, and straightway the yearling thoughts come back. The grass they feed on never withers, for though they are not evergreen, they 're ever blue to me. For though not evergreen to you, to me they 're ever blue.

I do not fear my thoughts will die,
For never yet it was so dry
As to scorch the azure of the sky.
It knows no withering and no drought,
Though all eyes crop, it ne'er gives out.
My eyes my flocks are;
Mountains my crops are.
I do not fear my flocks will stray,
For they were made to roam the day,
For they can wander with the latest light,
Yet be at home at night.

Just spent a couple of hours (eight to ten) with Miss Mary Emerson at Holbrook's. The wittiest and most vivacious woman that I know, certainly that woman among my acquaintance whom it is most profitable to

meet, the least frivolous, who will most surely provoke to good conversation and the expression of what is in you. She is singular, among women at least, in being really and perseveringly interested to know what thinkers think. She relates herself surely to the intellectual where she goes. It is perhaps her greatest praise and peculiarity that she, more surely than any other woman, gives her companion occasion to utter his best thought. In spite of her own biases, she can entertain a large thought with hospitality, and is not prevented by any intellectuality in it, as women commonly are. In short, she is a genius, as woman seldom is, reminding you less often of her sex than any woman whom I know. In that sense she is capable of a masculine appreciation of poetry and philosophy. I never talked with any other woman who I thought accompanied me so far in describing a poetic experience. Miss Fuller is the only woman I think of in this connection, and of her rather from her fame than from any knowledge of her. Miss Emerson expressed to-night a singular want of respect for her own sex, saying that they were frivolous almost without exception, that woman was the weaker vessel, etc.; that into whatever family she might go, she depended more upon the "clown" for society than upon the lady of the house. Men are more likely to have opinions of their own.

The cattle-train came down last night from Vermont with snow nearly a foot thick upon it. It is as if, in the fall of the year, a swift traveller should come out of the north with snow upon his coat. So it snows. Such, some years, may be our first snow.

Just in proportion to the outward poverty is the in-

ward wealth. In cold weather fire burns with a clearer flame.

Nov. 14. *Friday.* Surveying the Ministerial Lot in the southwestern part of the town. Unexpectedly find Heywood's Pond frozen over thinly, it being shallow and coldly placed.

In the evening went to a party. It is a bad place to go to, — thirty or forty persons, mostly young women, in a small room, warm and noisy. Was introduced to two young women. The first one was as lively and loquacious as a chickadee; had been accustomed to the society of watering-places, and therefore could get no refreshment out of such a dry fellow as I. The other was said to be pretty-looking, but I rarely look people in their faces, and, moreover, I could not hear what she said, there was such a clacking, — could only see the motion of her lips when I looked that way. I could imagine better places for conversation, where there should be a certain degree of silence surrounding you, and less than forty talking at once. Why, this afternoon, even, I did better. There was old Mr. Joseph Hosmer and I ate our luncheon of cracker and cheese together in the woods. I heard all he said, though it was not much, to be sure, and he could hear me. And then he talked out of such a glorious repose, taking a leisurely bite at the cracker and cheese between his words; and so some of him was communicated to me, and some of me to him, I trust.

These parties, I think, are a part of the machinery of modern society, that young people may be brought together to form marriage connections.

What is the use of going to see people whom yet you never see, and who never see you? I begin to suspect that it is not necessary that we should see one another.

Some of my friends make singular blunders. They go out of their way to talk with certain young women of whom they think, or have heard, that they are pretty, and take pains to introduce me to them. That may be a reason why they should look at them, but it is not a reason why they should talk with them. I confess that I am lacking a sense, perchance, in this respect, and I derive no pleasure from talking with a young woman half an hour simply because she has regular features. The society of young women is the most unprofitable I have ever tried. They are so light and flighty that you can never be sure whether they are there or not there. I prefer to talk with the more staid and settled, *settled for life*, in every sense.

I met a man yesterday afternoon in the road who behaved as if he was deaf, and I talked with him in the cold in a loud tone for fifteen minutes, but that uncertainty about his ears, and the necessity I felt to talk loudly, took off the fine edge of what I had to say and prevented my saying anything satisfactory. It is bad enough when your neighbor does not understand you, but if there is any uncertainty as to whether he hears you, so that you are obliged to become your own auditor, you are so much the poorer speaker, and so there is a double failure.

Nov. 15. Here is a rainy day, which keeps me in the house.

Asked Therien this afternoon if he had got a new idea

this summer. "Good Lord!" says he, "a man that has to work as I do, if he does not forget the ideas he has had, he will do well. Maybe the man you work with is inclined to race; then, by gorry, your mind must be there; you think of weeds." [1]

I am pleased to read in Stoever's Life of Linnæus (Trapp's translation) that his father, being the first learned man of his family, changed his family name and borrowed that of Linnæus (Linden-tree-man) from a lofty linden tree which stood near his native place, — "a custom," he says, "not unfrequent in Sweden, to take fresh appellations from natural objects." What more fit than that the advent of a new man into a family should acquire for it, and transmit to his posterity, a new patronymic? Such a custom suggests, if it does not argue, an unabated vigor in the race, relating it to those primitive times when men did, indeed, acquire a name, as memorable and distinct as their characters. It is refreshing to get to a man whom you will not be satisfied to call John's son or Johnson's son, but a new name applicable to himself alone, he being the first of his kind. We may say there have been but so many men as there are surnames, and of all the John-Smiths there has been but one true John Smith, and he of course is dead. Get yourself therefore a name, and better a nickname than none at all. There was one enterprising boy came to school to me whose name was "Buster," and an honorable name it was. He was the only boy in the school, to my knowledge, who was named.[2]

[1] [*Walden*, p. 165; Riv. 233.]

[2] [*Excursions*, pp. 236, 237; Riv. 290. See also *Journal*, vol. ii, p. 407.]

What shall we say of the comparative intellectual vigor of the ancients and moderns, when we read of Theophrastus, the father of botany, that he composed more than two hundred treatises in the third century before Christ and the seventeenth before printing, about twenty of which remain, and that these fill six volumes in folio printed at Venice? Among the last are two works on natural history and the generation of plants. What a stimulus to a literary man to read his works! They *were opera*, not an essay or two, which you can carry between your thumb and finger.

Dioscorides (according to Stoever), who lived in the first century after Christ, was the first to inquire into the medicinal properties of plants, "the literary father of the *materia medica*." His work remains. And next comes Pliny the Elder, and "by his own avowal (?), his natural history is a compilation from about twenty-five hundred (?) different authors." Conrad Gesner, of the Sixteenth Century, the first botanist of note among the moderns; also a naturalist generally. In this century botany first "became a regular academical study."

I think it would be a good discipline for Channing, who writes poetry in a sublimo-slipshod style, to write Latin, for then he would be compelled to say something always, and frequently have recourse to his grammar and dictionary. Methinks that what a man might write in a dead language could be more surely translated into good sense in his own language, than his own language could be translated into good Latin, or the dead language.

Nov. 16. *Sunday.* It is remarkable that the highest intellectual mood which the world tolerates is the perception of the truth of the most ancient revelations, now in some respects out of date; but any direct revelation, any original thoughts, it hates like virtue. The fathers and the mothers of the town would rather hear the young man or young woman at their tables express reverence for some old statement of the truth than utter a direct revelation themselves. They don't want to have any prophets born into their families, — damn them! So far as thinking is concerned, surely original thinking is the divinest thing. Rather we should reverently watch for the least motions, the least scintillations, of thought in this sluggish world, and men should run to and fro on the occasion more than at an earthquake. We check and repress the divinity that stirs within us, to fall down and worship the divinity that is dead without us. I go to see many a good man or good woman, so called, and utter freely that thought which alone it was given to me to utter; but there was a man who lived a long, long time ago, and his name was Moses, and another whose name was Christ, and if your thought does not, or does not appear to, coincide with what they said, the good man or the good woman has no ears to hear you. They think they love God! It is only his old clothes, of which they make scarecrows for the children. Where will they come nearer to God than in those very children?

A man lately preached here against the abuse of the Sabbath and recommended to walk in the fields and dance on that [day], — good advice enough, which may take effect after a while. But with the mass of men the

reason is convinced long before the life is. They may see the Church and the Sabbath to be false, but nothing else to be true. One woman in the neighborhood says, "Nobody can hear Mr. —— preach, — hear him through, — without seeing that he is a good man." "Well, is there any truth in what he says?" asks another. "Oh, yes, it's true enough, but then it won't do; you know it won't do. Now there 's our George, he 's got the whole of it; and when I say, 'Come, George, put on your things and go along to meeting,' he says, 'No, Mother, I 'm going out into the fields.' It won't do." The fact is, this woman has not character and religion enough to exert a controlling influence over her children by her example, and knows of no such police as the Church and the minister.

If it were not for death and funerals, I think the institution of the Church would not stand longer. The necessity that men be decently buried — our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters and children (notwithstanding the danger that they be buried alive) — will long, if not forever, prevent our laying violent hands on it. If salaries were stopped off, and men walked out of this world bodily at last, the minister and his vocation would be gone. What is the churchyard but a graveyard? Imagine a church at the other end of the town, without any carrion beneath or beside it, but all the dead regularly carried to the bone-mill! The cry that comes up from the churches in all the great cities in the world is, "How they stink!"

What more fatal vengeance could Linnæus have taken than to give the names of his enemies to pernicious and unsightly plants, thus simply putting upon record

for as long as the Linnæan system shall prevail who were his friends and foes? It was enough to record the fact that they were opposed to him. To this they could not themselves have objected, nor could he have taken a more fatal vengeance. (*Vide* Scraps.)

Noticed this afternoon that where a pitch pine three inches in diameter had been cut down last winter, it had sent out more than a hundred horizontal plumes about a foot long close together and on every side. Plenty of ripe checkerberries now. Do they blossom again in the spring?[1] The ferns, which are almost the only green things left now, love the crevices and seams of moist cliffs and boulders and adorn them very much. They become more conspicuous now than at any season.

I had a thought this morning before I awoke. I endeavored to retain it in my mind's grasp after I became conscious, yet I doubted, while I lay on my back, whether my mind could apprehend it when I should stand erect. It is a far more difficult feat to get up without spilling your morning thought, than that which is often practiced of taking a cup of water from behind your head as you lie on your back and drinking from it. It was the thought I endeavored to express on the first page of to-day.

Thinkers and writers are in foolish haste to come before the world with crude works. Young men are persuaded by their friends, or by their own restless ambition, to write a course of lectures in a summer against the ensuing winter; and what it took the lecturer a summer to write, it will take his audience but an hour to

[1] Only once.

forget. If time is short, then you have no time to waste.

That sounds like a fine mode of expressing gratitude referred to by Linnæus. Hermann was a botanist who gave up his place to Tournefort, who was unprovided for. "Hermann," says Linnæus, "came afterwards to Paris, and Tournefort in honor of him ordered the fountains to play in the royal garden."

Nov. 17. All things tend to flow to him who can make the best use of them, even away from their legal owner. A thief, finding with the property of the Italian naturalist Donati, whom he had robbed abroad, a collection of rare African seeds, forwarded them to Linnæus from Marseilles. Donati suffered shipwreck and never returned.

Nov. 18. Surveying these days the Ministerial Lot.

Now at sundown I hear the hooting of an owl, — *hoo hoo hoo, hoorer hoo.*[1] It sounds like the hooting of an idiot or a maniac broke loose. This is faintly answered in a different strain, apparently from a greater distance, almost as if it were the echo, *i. e.* so far as the *succession* is concerned. This is my music each evening. I heard it last evening. The men who help me call it the "hooting owl" and think it is the cat owl. It is a sound admirably suited [to] the swamp and to the twilight woods, suggesting a vast undeveloped nature which men have not recognized nor satisfied. I rejoice that there are owls. They represent the stark, twilight, unsatisfied thoughts

[1] [*Walden*, p. 139; Riv. 196.]

I have. Let owls do the idiotic and maniacal hooting for men. This sound faintly suggests the infinite roominess of nature, that there is a world in which owls live. Yet how few are seen, even by the hunters! The sun has shone for a day over this savage swamp, where the single spruce stands covered with usnea moss, which a Concord merchant mortgaged once to the trustees of the ministerial fund and lost, but now for a different race of creatures a new day dawns over this wilderness, which one would have thought was sufficiently dismal before. Here hawks also circle by day, and chickadees are heard, and rabbits and partridges abound.[1]

The chopper who works in the woods all day for many weeks or months at a time becomes intimately acquainted with them in his way. He is more open in some respects to the impressions they are fitted to make than the naturalist who goes to see them. He is not liable to exaggerate insignificant features. He really forgets himself, forgets to observe, and at night he *dreams* of the swamp, its phenomena and events. Not so the naturalist; enough of his unconscious life does not pass there.

A man can hardly be said to be *there* if he *knows* that he is there, or to go there if he knows where he is going. The man who is bent upon his work is frequently in the best attitude to observe what is irrelevant to his work. (*Mem.* Wordsworth's observations on relaxed attention.) You must be conversant with things for a long time to know much about them, like the moss which has hung from the spruce, and as the partridge and the rabbit are acquainted with the thickets and at length have acquired

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 138, 139; Riv. 196, 197.]

the color of the places they frequent. If the man of science can put all his knowledge into propositions, the woodman has a great deal of incommunicable knowledge.

Deacon Brown told me to-day of a tall, raw-boned fellow by the name of Hosmer who used to help draw the seine behind the Jones house, who once, when he had hauled it without getting a single shad, held up a little perch in sport above his face, to show what he had got. At that moment the perch wiggled and dropped right down his throat head foremost, and nearly suffocated him; and it was only after considerable time, during which the man suffered much, that he was extracted or forced down. He was in a worse predicament than a fish hawk would have been.

In the woods south of the swamp are many great holes made by digging for foxes.

Nov. 19. Old Mr. Joseph Hosmer, who helped me to-day, said that he used to know all about the lots, but since they 've chopped off so much, and the woods have grown up, he finds himself lost. Thirty or forty years ago, when he went to meeting, he knew every face in the meeting-house, even the boys and girls, they looked so much like their parents; but after ten or twelve years they would have outgrown his knowledge entirely (they would have altered so), but he knew the old folks still, because they held their own and did n't alter. Just so he could tell the boundaries of the old wood which had n't been cut down, but the young wood altered so much in a few years that he could n't tell anything about it. When

I asked him why the old road which went by this swamp was so roundabout, he said he would answer me as Mr. —— —— did him in a similar case once, — "Why, if they had made it straight, they would n't have left any room for improvement."

Standing by Harrington's pond-hole in the swamp, which had skimmed over, we saw that there were many holes through the thin black ice, of various sizes, from a few inches to more than a foot in diameter, all of which were *perfectly* circular. Mr. H. asked me if I could account for it. As we stood considering, we jarred the boggy ground and made a dimple in the water, and this accident, we thought, betrayed the cause of it; *i. e.* the circular wavelets so wore off the edges of the ice when once a hole was made. The ice was very thin, and the holes were perfect disks. But what jarred the ground and shook the water? Perhaps the wind which shook the spruce and pine trees which stood in the quaking ground, as well as the little life in the water itself, and the wind on the ice and water itself. There was a more permanent form created by the dimple, but not yet a shellfish.

Nov. 20. It is often said that melody can be heard farther than noise, and the finest melody farther than the coarsest. I think there is truth in this, and that accordingly those strains of the piano which reach me here in my attic stir me so much more than the sounds which I should hear if I were below in the parlor, because they are so much purer and diviner melody. They who sit farthest off from the noisy and bustling world are not at pains to distinguish what is sweet and musical, for that

alone can reach them; that chiefly comes down to posterity.

Hard and steady and engrossing labor with the hands, especially out of doors, is invaluable to the literary man and serves him directly. Here I have been for six days surveying in the woods, and yet when I get home at evening, somewhat weary at last, and beginning to feel that I have nerves, I find myself more susceptible than usual to the finest influences, as music and poetry. The very air can intoxicate me, or the least sight or sound, as if my finer senses had acquired an appetite by their fast.

As I was riding to the Ministerial Lot this morning, about 8.30 A. M., I observed that the white clouds were disposed raywise in the west and also in the east, — as if the sun's rays had split and so arranged them? A striking symmetry in the heavens. What its law? Mr. J. Hosmer tells me that one spring he saw a red squirrel gnaw the bark of a maple and then suck the juice, and this he repeated many times.

What is the bush where we dined in Poplar Hollow? Hosmer tells of finding a kind of apple, with an apple seed (?) to it, on scabish which had been injured or cut off. Thinks plowed ground more moist than grass ground. That there are more leaves on the ground on the north side of a hill than on the other sides, and that the trees thrive more there, perhaps because the winds cause the leaves to fall there.

Nov. 21. My mother says that, visiting once at Captain Pulsifer's at the North End, two sea-captains' wives told the girl, when the things were carried out to

be replenished, not to turn out their slops, as it would drown their husbands who were at sea.

Frank Brown showed me to-day the velvet duck (white-winged coot) and the surf duck. These two, as well as the scaup (?) duck, he says are called coots. Saw also a fine brant, a shore lark, a pine grosbeak, kittiwake gull and Bonaparte's ditto (the last very like the first but smaller), all shot at Clark's Island; also a little brown creeper with a woodpecker tail and curved bill, killed here.

Old Mr. Joseph Hosmer, who lives where Hadley did, remembers when there were two or three times as many inhabitants in that part of the town as there are now: a blacksmith with his shop in front where he now lives, a goldsmith (Oliver Wheeler?) at the fork in the road just beyond him, one *in front* of Tarbell's, one in the orchard on the south side of the lane in front of Tarbell's, one, Nathan Wheeler, further on the right of the old road by the balm-of-Gilead, three between Tarbell's and J. P. Brown's, a tavern at Loring's, a store at the Dodge cottage that was burnt, also at Derby's (?), etc., etc. The farms were smaller then. One man now often holds two or three old farms. We walk in a deserted country.

The Major Heywood and mill roads together turn out of the Marlborough road just beyond the Desert. The former keeps the left to the powder-mills, the latter the right to the sawmill. The main road beyond Loring's used to be called Law's Path, where is Law's Brook (south branch of Nagog, *i. e.* Fort Pond?). The old roads furrow the Second Division woods like trenches.

Better men never lecture than they hire to come here. Why don't they ask Edmund Hosmer or George Minott? I would rather hear them decline than most of these hirelings lecture.

Nov. 22. The milkweed pods by the roadside are yet but half emptied of their silky contents. For months the gales are dispersing their seeds, though we have had snow.

Saw E. Hosmer this afternoon making a road for himself along a hillside (I being on my way to Saw Mill Brook). He turned over a stone, and I saw under it many crickets and ants still lively, which had gone into winter quarters there apparently. There were many little galleries leading under the stone, indenting the hardened earth like veins. (*Mem.* Turn over a rock in midwinter and see if you can find them.) That is the reason, then, that I have not heard the crickets lately. I have frequently seen them lurking under the eaves or portico of a stone, even in midsummer.

At the brook the partridge-berries checker the ground with their leaves, now interspersed with red berries. The cress at the bottom of the brook is doubly beautiful now, because it is green while most other plants are sere. It rises and falls and waves with the current. There are many young hornbeams there which still retain their withered leaves. As I returned through Hosmer's field, the sun was setting just beneath a black cloud by which it had been obscured, and as it had been a cold and windy afternoon, its light, which fell suddenly on some white pines between me and it, lighting them up like a shim-

mering fire, and also on the oak leaves and chestnut stems, was quite a circumstance. It was from the contrast between the dark and comfortless afternoon and this bright and cheerful light, almost fire. The eastern hills and woods, too, were clothed in a still golden light. The light of the setting sun, just emerged from a cloud and suddenly falling on and lighting up the needles of the white pine between you and it, after a raw and louring afternoon near the beginning of winter, is a memorable phenomenon. A sort of Indian summer in the day, which thus far has been denied to the year. After a cold gray day this cheering light almost warms us by its resemblance to fire.

Nov. 23. *Sunday.* The trees (counting all three inches in diameter) in Conantum Swamp are: —

Bass	6	
Black ash	8	
Elm	16	(See if all are really elms.)
Red (?) oak	2	
White ash	2	
Walnut	3	
Apple	5	
Maple	9	
Hornbeam	2	
Swamp white (?) oak	1	

Dogwood also there is, and cone-bearing willow, and what kind of winterberry with a light-colored bark?

Another such a sunset to-night as the last, while I was on Conantum.

Nov. 24. Setting stakes in the swamp (Ministerial). Saw seven black ducks fly out of the peat-hole. Saw there also a tortoise still stirring, the painted tortoise, I believe.

Found on the south side of the swamp the *Lygodium palmatum*, which Bigelow calls the only climbing fern in our latitude, an evergreen, called (with others) snake-tongue, as I find in Loudon.

The Irishman who helped me says, when I ask why his countrymen do not learn trades, — do something but the plainest and hardest work, — they are too old to learn trades when they come here.

Nov. 25. This morning the ground is again covered with snow, deeper than before.

In the afternoon walked to the east part of Lincoln. Saw a tree on the turnpike full of hickory-nuts which had an agreeable appearance. Saw also quite a flock of the pine grosbeak, a plump and handsome bird as big as a robin. When returning between Bear Hill and the rail-road, the sun had set and there was a very clear amber light in the west, and, turning about, we were surprised at the darkness in the east, the crescent of night, almost as if the air were thick, a thick snow-storm were gathering, which, as we had faced the west, we were not prepared for; yet the air was clear.

That kind of sunset which I witnessed on Saturday and Sunday is perhaps peculiar to the late autumn. The sun is unseen behind a hill. Only this bright white light like a fire falls on the trembling needles of the pine.

When surveying in the swamp on the 20th last, at

sundown, I heard the owls. Hosmer said: "If you ever minded it, it is about the surest sign of rain that there is. Don't you know that last Friday night you heard them and spoke of them, and the next day it rained?" This time there were other signs of rain in abundance. "But night before last," said I, "when you were not here, they hooted louder than ever, and we have had no rain yet." At any rate, it rained hard the 21st, and by that rain the river was raised much higher than it has been this fall.

Nov. 30. *Sunday.* A rather cold and windy afternoon, with some snow not yet melted on the ground. Under the south side of the hill between Brown's and Tarbell's, in a warm nook, disturbed three large gray squirrels and some partridges, who had all sought out this bare and warm place. While the squirrels hid themselves in the tree-tops, I sat on an oak stump by an old cellar-hole and mused. This squirrel is always an unexpectedly large animal to see frisking about. My eye wanders across the valley to the pine woods which fringe the opposite side, and in their aspect my eye finds something which addresses itself to my nature. Methinks that in my mood I was asking Nature to give me a sign. I do not know exactly what it was that attracted my eye. I experienced a transient gladness, at any rate, at something which I saw. I am sure that my eye rested with pleasure on the white pines, now reflecting a silvery light, the infinite stories of their boughs, tier above tier, a sort of basaltic structure, a crumbling precipice of pine horizontally stratified. Each pine is like a great green feather stuck in the ground. A myriad white pine

boughs extend themselves horizontally, one above and behind another, each bearing its burden of silvery sunlight, with darker seams between them, as if it were a great crumbling piny precipice thus stratified. On this my eyes pastured, while the squirrels were up the trees behind me. That, at any rate, it was that I got by my afternoon walk, a certain recognition from the pine, some congratulation. Where is my home? It is indistinct as an old cellar-hole, now a faint indentation merely in a farmer's field, which he has plowed into and rounded off its edges years ago, and I sit by the old site on the stump of an oak which once grew there. Such is the nature where we have lived. Thick birch groves stand here and there, dark brown (?) now with white lines more or less distinct.

The *Lygodium palmatum* is quite abundant on that side of the swamp, twining round the goldenrods, etc., etc.

III

DECEMBER, 1851

(ÆT. 34)

Dec. 12. In regard to my friends, I feel that I know and have communion with a finer and subtler part of themselves which does not put me off when they put me off, which is not cold to me when they are cold, not till I am cold. I hold by a deeper and stronger tie than absence can sunder.

Ah, dear nature, the mere remembrance, after a short forgetfulness, of the pine woods! I come to it as a hungry man to a crust of bread.

I have been surveying for twenty or thirty days, living coarsely, even as respects my diet, — for I find that that will always alter to suit my employment, — indeed, leading a quite trivial life; and to-night, for the first time, had made a fire in my chamber and endeavored to return to myself. I wished to ally myself to the powers that rule the universe. I wished to dive into some deep stream of thoughtful and devoted life, which meandered through retired and fertile meadows far from towns. I wished to do again, or for once, things quite congenial to my highest inmost and most sacred nature, to lurk in crystalline thought like the trout under verdurous banks, where stray mankind should only see my bubble come to the surface. I wished to live, ah! as far away as a man can think. I wished for leisure and quiet to let my life flow in its proper channels, with its proper currents;

when I might not waste the days, might establish daily prayer and thanksgiving in my family; might do my own work and not the work of Concord and Carlisle, which would yield me better than money. (How much forbearance, aye, sacrifice and loss, goes to every accomplishment! I am thinking by what long discipline and at what cost a man learns to speak simply at last.) I bethought myself, while my fire was kindling, to open one of Emerson's books, which it happens that I rarely look at, to try what a chance sentence out of that could do for me; thinking, at the same time, of a conversation I had with him the other night, I finding fault with him for the stress he had laid on some of Margaret Fuller's whims and superstitions, but he declaring gravely that she was one of those persons whose experience warranted her attaching importance to such things, — as the *Sortes Virgilianae*, for instance, of which her numerous friends could tell remarkable instances. At any rate, I saw that he was disposed [to] regard such things more seriously than I. The first sentence which I opened upon in his book was this: "If, with a high trust, he can thus submit himself, he will find that ample returns are poured into his bosom out of what seemed hours of obstruction and loss. Let him not grieve too much on account of unfit associates. . . . In a society of perfect sympathy, no word, no act, no record, would be. He will learn that it is not much matter what he reads, what he does. Be a scholar, and he shall have the scholar's part of everything," etc., etc.[1]

[1] [*Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*, Centenary Ed., p. 184; Riv. 177, 178.]

Most of this responded well enough to my mood, and this would be as good an instance of the *Sortes Virgilianae* as most to quote. But what makes this coincidence very little if at all remarkable to me is the fact of the obviousness of the moral, so that I had, perhaps, *thought* the same thing myself twenty times during the day, and yet had not been *contented* with that account of it, leaving me thus to be amused by the coincidence, rather than impressed as by an intimation out of the deeps.

The Irishman (MacCarty) who helped me survey day before yesterday would not sit on a rock with me to eat his dinner (there being snow on the ground), from a notion that there was nothing so deadly as sitting on a rock, — sure to give you a cold in the back. He would rather stand. So the doctors said, down in the Province of New Brunswick. But I warranted him that he would not get a cold in his back, which was half as broad again as mine, and so he minded me as a new doctor. A gray-headed boy, good for nothing but to eat his dinner. These Irishmen have no heads. Let me inquire strictly into a man's descent, and if his remotest ancestors were Erse, let me not have him to help me survey. One or two I have seen, handy men, but I learned that their fathers, who came from Ireland, were of the Scotch-Irish. This fellow was sure to do the wrong thing from the best motives, and the only time he was spry was when he was running to correct his own blunders out of his own head — and make them worse than before, but I could not stop him; then I saw the broad red soles of his new cowhide boots alternately rising and falling like the buckets of a dasher or water-wheel. When he had lost his

plumb and went to get it, then he showed the red soles of his boots.

Nothing is so sure to make itself known as the truth, for what else waits to be known?

Dec. 13. *Saturday.* While surveying to-day, saw much mountain laurel for this neighborhood in Mason's pasture, just over the line in Carlisle. Its bright yellowish-green shoots are agreeable to my eye. We had one hour of almost Indian summer weather in the middle of the day. I felt the influence of the sun. It melted my stoniness a little. The pines looked like old friends again. Cutting a path through a swamp where was much brittle dogwood, etc., etc., I wanted to know the name of every shrub. This varied employment, to which my necessities compel me, serves instead of foreign travel and the lapse of time. If it makes me forget some things which I ought to remember, it no doubt enables me to forget many things which it is well to forget. By stepping aside from my chosen path so often, I see myself better and am enabled to criticise myself. Of this nature is the only true lapse of time. It seems an age since I took walks and wrote in my journal, and when shall I revisit the glimpses of the moon? To be able to see ourselves, not merely as others see us, but as we are, that service a *variety* of absorbing employments does us.

I would not be rude to the fine intimations of the gods for fear of incurring the reproach of superstition.

When I think of the Carlisle man whom I saw to-day and the filthiness of his house, I am reminded that there are all degrees of barbarism, even in this so-called civil-

ized community. Carlisle, too, belongs to the Nineteenth Century.

Saw Perez Blood in his frock, — a stuttering, sure, unpretending man, who does not speak without thinking, does not guess. When I reflected how different he was from his neighbors, Conant, Mason, Hodgman, I saw that it was not so much outwardly, but that I saw an inner form. We do, indeed, see through and through each other, through the veil of the body, and see the real form and character in spite of the garment. Any coarseness or tenderness is seen and felt under whatever garb. How nakedly men appear to us! for the spiritual assists the natural eye.

Dec. 14. The boys have been skating for a week, but I have had no time to skate for surveying. I have hardly realized that there was ice, though I have walked over it about this business. As for the weather, all seasons are pretty much alike to one who is actively at work in the woods. I should say that there were two or three remarkably warm days and as many cold ones in the course of a year, but the rest are all alike in respect to temperature. This is my answer to my acquaintances who ask me if I have not found it very cold being out all day.

McKean tells me of hardy horses left to multiply on the Isle of Sable. His father had one (for the shipwrecked to eat). Can they be descendants of those beasts Champlain or Lescarbot refers to?

I hear the small woodpecker whistle as he flies toward the leafless wood on Fair Haven, doomed to be cut

this winter. The chickadees remind me of Hudson's Bay for some reason. I look on them as natives of a more northern latitude.

The now dry and empty but clean-washed cups of the blue-curls spot the half snow-covered grain-fields. Where lately was a delicate blue flower, now all the winter are held up these dry chalices. What mementos to stand above the snow!

The fresh young spruces in the swamp are free from moss, but it adheres especially to the bare and dead masts of spruce trees oftentimes half destitute of bark. They look like slanting may-poles with drooping or withered garlands and festoons hanging to them. For an emblem of stillness, a spruce swamp with hanging moss now or at any season.

I notice that hornets' nests are hardly deserted by the insects than they look as if a truant boy had fired a charge of shot through them,—all ragged and full of holes. It is the work either of the insects themselves or else of other insects or birds.

It is the andromeda (panicled?) that has the fine-barked stem and the green wood, in the swamps.

Why not live out more yet, and have my friends and relations altogether in nature, only my acquaintances among the villagers? That way diverges from this I follow, not at a sharp but a very wide angle. Ah, nature is serene and immortal! Am I not one of the Zincali?

There is a beautifully pure greenish-blue sky under the clouds now in the southwest just before sunset. I hear the ice along the edge of the river cracking as the water settles. It has settled about two feet, leaving

ice for the most part without water on the meadows, all uneven and cracked over the hummocks, so that you cannot run straight for sliding. The ice takes the least hint of a core to eke out a perfect plant; the wrecks of bulrushes and meadow grass are expanded into palm leaves and other luxuriant foliage. I see delicate-looking green pads frozen into the ice, and, here and there, where some tender and still green weeds from the warm bottom of the river have lately been cast up on to the ice.

There are certain places where the river will always be open, where perchance warmer springs come in. There are such places in every character, genial and open in the coldest seasons.

I come from contact with certain acquaintances, whom even I am disposed to look toward as possible friends. It oftenest happens that I come from them wounded. Only they can wound me seriously, and that perhaps without their knowing it.

Dec. 17. The pitch pine woods on the right of the Corner road. A piercing cold afternoon, wading in the snow. R. Rice was going to Sudbury to put his bees into the cellar for fear they would freeze. He had a small hive; not enough to keep each other warm. The pitch pines hold the snow well. It lies now in balls on their plumes and in streaks on their branches, their low branches rising at a small angle and meeting each other. A certain dim religious light comes through this roof of pine leaves and snow. It is a sombre twilight, yet in some places the sun streams in, producing the strongest contrasts of light and shade.

The winter morning is the time to see the woods and shrubs in their perfection, wearing their snowy and frosty dress. Even he who visits them half an hour after sunrise will have lost some of their most delicate and fleeting beauties. The trees wear their snowy burden but coarsely after midday, and it no longer expresses the character of the tree. I observed that early in the morning every pine-needle was covered with a frosty sheath, but soon after sunrise it was all gone. You walk in the pitch pine wood as under a penthouse. The stems and branches of the trees look black by contrast. You wander zigzag through the aisles of the wood, where stillness and twilight reign.

Improve every opportunity to express yourself in writing, as if it were your last.

I do not know but a pine wood is as substantial and as memorable a fact as a friend. I am more sure to come away from it cheered, than from those who come nearest to being my friends. It is unfortunate for the chopper and the walker when the cold wind comes from the same side with the sun, for then he cannot find a warm recess in which to sit. It is pleasant to walk now through open and stately white pine woods. Their plumes do not hold so much snow commonly, unless where their limbs rest or are weighed down on to a neighboring tree. It is cold but still in their midst, where the snow is untracked by man, and ever and anon you see the snow-dust, shone on by the sun, falling from their tops and, as it strikes the lower limbs, producing innumerable new showers. For, as after a rain there is a second rain in the woods, so after a light snow there is a second snow in the woods,

when the wind rises. The branches of the white pine are more horizontal than those of the pitch, and the white streaks of snow on them look accordingly. I perceive that the young black oaks and the red oaks, too, methinks, still keep their leaves as well as the white. This piercing wind is so nearly from the west this afternoon that, to stand at once in a sheltered and a sunny place, you must seek the south-southeast side of the woods.

What slight but important distinctions between one creature and another! What little, but essential, advantages one enjoys over another! I noticed this afternoon a squirrel's nest high in the fork of a white pine. Thither he easily ascends, but many creatures strive in vain to get at him.

The lower branches of the hemlock point down, and even trail on the ground, the whole tree making a perfect canopy.

When they who have aspired to be friends cease to sympathize, it is the part of religion to keep asunder.

One of the best men I know often offends me by uttering made words — the very best words, of course, or dinner speeches, most smooth and gracious and fluent repartees, a sort of talking to Buncombe, a dash of polite conversation, a graceful bending, as if I were Master Slingsby of promising parts, from the University. O would you but be simple and downright! Would you but cease your palaver! It is the misfortune of being a gentleman and famous. The conversation of gentlemen after dinner! One of the best of men and wisest, to whom this diabolical formality will adhere. Repeating himself, shampooing himself! Passing the time of

day, as if he were just introduced! No words are so tedious. Never a natural or simple word or yawn. It produces an appearance of phlegm and stupidity in me the auditor. I am suddenly the closest and most phlegmatic of mortals, and the conversation comes to naught. Such speeches as an ex-Member of Congress might make to an ex-Member of Parliament.

To explain to a friend is to suppose that you are not intelligent of one another. If you are not, to what purpose will you explain?

My acquaintances will sometimes wonder why I will impoverish myself by living aloof from this or that company, but greater would be the impoverishment if I should associate with them.

Dec. 19. In all woods is heard now far and near the sound of the woodchopper's axe, a twilight sound, now in the night of the year, men having come out for fuel to the forests, — as if men had stolen forth in the arctic night to get fuel to keep their fires a-going. Men go to the woods now for fuel who never go there at any other time. Why should it be so pleasing to look into a thick pine wood where the sunlight streams in and gilds it? The sound of the axes far in the horizon sounds like the dropping of the eaves. Now the sun gets suddenly without a cloud, and with scarcely any redness following, so pure is the atmosphere, — only a faint rosy blush along the horizon.

Dec. 20. Saturday. 2 P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill and plain below.

Saw a large hawk circling over a pine wood below me, and screaming, apparently that he might discover his prey by their flight. Travelling ever by wider circles. What a symbol of the thoughts, now soaring, now descending, taking larger and larger circles, or smaller and smaller. It flies not directly whither it is bound, but advances by circles, like a courtier of the skies. No such noble progress! How it comes round, as with a wider sweep of thought! But the majesty is in the imagination of the beholder, for the bird is intent on its prey. Circling and ever circling, you cannot divine which way it will incline, till perchance it dives down straight as an arrow to its mark. It rises higher above where I stand, and I see with beautiful distinctness its wings against the sky, — primaries and secondaries, and the rich tracery of the outline of the latter (?), its inner wings, or wing-linings, within the outer, — like a great moth seen against the sky. A will-o'-the-wind. Following its path, as it were through the vortices of the air. The poetry of motion. Not as preferring one place to another, but enjoying each as long as possible. Most gracefully so surveys new scenes and revisits the old. As if that hawk were made to be the symbol of my thought, how bravely he came round over those parts of the wood which he had not surveyed, taking in a new segment, annexing new territories! Without "heave-yo!" it trims its sail. It goes about without the creaking of a block. That America yacht of the air that never makes a tack, though it rounds the globe itself, takes in and shakes out its reefs without a flutter,— its sky-scrapers all under its control. Holds up one wing, as if to admire, and sweeps off this way,

then holds up the other and sweeps that. If there are two concentrically circling, it is such a regatta as Southampton waters never witnessed.

Flights of imagination, Coleridgean thoughts. So a man is said to soar in his thought, ever to fresh woods and pastures new. Rises as in thought.

Snow-squalls pass, obscuring the sun, as if blown off from a larger storm.

Since last Monday the ground has [been] covered half a foot or more with snow; and the ice also, before I have had a skate. Hitherto we had had mostly bare, frozen ground. Red, white, green, and, in the distance, dark brown are the colors of the winter landscape. I view it now from the cliffs. The red shrub oaks on the white ground of the plain beneath make a pretty scene. Most walkers are pretty effectually shut up by the snow.

I observe that they who saw down trees in the woods with a cross-cut saw carry a mat to kneel on.

It is no doubt a good lesson for the woodchopper, the long day alone in the woods, and he gets more than his half dollar a cord.

Say the thing with which you labor. It is a waste of time for the writer to use his talents merely. Be faithful to your genius. Write in the strain that interests you most. Consult not the popular taste.

The red oak leaves are even more fresh and glossy than the white.

A clump of white pines, seen far westward over the shrub oak plain, which is now lit up by the setting sun, a soft, feathery grove, with their gray stems indistinctly seen, like human beings come to their cabin door, stand-

ing expectant on the edge of the plain, impress me with a mild humanity. The trees indeed have hearts. With a certain affection the sun seems to send its farewell ray far and level over the copses to them, and they silently receive it with gratitude, like a group of settlers with their children. The pines impress me as human. A slight vaporous cloud floats high over them, while in the west the sun goes down apace behind glowing pines, and golden clouds like mountains skirt the horizon.

Nothing stands up more free from blame in this world than a pine tree.

The dull and blundering behavior of clowns will as surely polish the writer at last as the criticism of men of thought.

It is wonderful, wonderful, the unceasing demand that Christendom makes on you, that you speak *from a moral point of view*. Though you be a babe, the cry is, Repent, repent. The Christian world will not admit that a man has a just perception of any truth, unless at the same time he cries, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner."

What made the hawk mount? Did you perceive the manœuvre? Did he fill himself with air? Before you were aware of it, he had mounted by his spiral path into the heavens.

Our country is broad and rich, for here, within twenty miles of Boston, I can stand in a clearing in the woods and look a mile or more, over the shrub oaks, to the distant pine copses and horizon of uncut woods, without a house or road or cultivated field in sight.

Sunset in winter from a clearing in the woods, about Well Meadow Head.

They say that the Indians of the Great Basin live on the almonds of the pine. Have not I been fed by the pine for many a year?

Go out before sunrise or stay out till sunset.

Dec. 21. *Sunday.* My difficulties with my friends are such as no frankness will settle. There is no precept in the New Testament that will assist me. My nature, it may [be], is secret. Others can confess and explain; I cannot. It is not that I am too proud, but that is not what is wanted. Friendship is the unspeakable joy and blessing that results to two or more individuals who from constitution sympathize; and natures are liable to no mistakes, but will know each other through thick and thin. Between two by nature alike and fitted to sympathize there is no veil and there can be no obstacle. Who are the estranged? Two friends explaining.

I feel sometimes as if I could say to my friends, "My friends, I am aware how I have outraged you, how I have seemingly preferred hate to love, seemingly treated others kindly and you unkindly, sedulously concealed my love, and sooner or later expressed all and more than all my hate." I can imagine how I might utter something like this in some moment never to be realized. But let me say frankly that at the same time I feel, it may be with too little regret, that I am under an awful necessity to be what I am. If the truth were known, which I do not know, I have no concern with those friends whom I misunderstand or who misunderstand me.

The fates only are unkind that keep us asunder, but

my friend is ever kind. I am of the nature of stone. It takes the summer's sun to warm it.

My acquaintances sometimes imply that I am too cold; but each thing is warm enough of its kind. Is the stone too cold which absorbs the heat of the summer sun and does not part with it during the night? Crystals, though they be of ice, are not too cold to melt, but it was in melting that they were formed. Cold! I am most sensible of warmth in winter days. It is not the warmth of fire that you would have, but everything is warm and cold according to its nature. It is not that I am too cold, but that our warmth and coldness are not of the same nature; hence when I am absolutely warmest, I may be coldest to you. Crystal does not complain of crystal any more than the dove of its mate. You who complain that I am cold find Nature cold. To me she is warm. My heat is latent to you. Fire itself is cold to whatever is not of a nature to be warmed by it. A cool wind is warmer to a feverish man than the air of a furnace. That I am cold means that I am of another nature.

The dogwood and its berries in the *swamp* by the railroad, just above the red house, pendent on long stems which hang short down as if broken, betwixt yellowish (?) and greenish (?), white, ovoid, pearly (?) or waxen (?) berries. What is the color of them? Ah, give me to walk in the dogwood swamp, with its few coarse branches! Beautiful as Satan. The prinos or black alder berries appear to have been consumed; only the skins left, for the most part, sticking to the twigs, so that I thought there were fewer than usual. Is it that our woods have

had to entertain arctic visitors in unusual numbers, who have exhausted their stores?

Sunlight on pine-needles is the phenomenon of a winter day.

Who ever saw a partridge soar over the fields? To every creature its own nature. They are very wild; but are they scarce? or can you exterminate them for that?

As I stand by the edge of the swamp (Ministerial), a heavy-winged hawk flies home to it at sundown, just over my head, in silence. I cross some mink or musk-rat's devious path in the snow, with mincing feet and trailing body.

To-night, as so many nights within the year, the clouds arrange themselves in the east at sunset in long converging bars, according to the simple tactics of the sky. It is the melon-rind jig. It would serve for a permanent description of the sunset. Such is the morning and such the evening, converging bars inclose the day at each end as within a melon rind, and the morning and evening are one day. Long after the sun has set, and downy clouds have turned dark, and the shades of night have taken possession of the east, some rosy clouds will be seen in the upper sky over the portals of the darkening west.

How swiftly the earth appears to revolve at sunset, which at midday appears to rest on its axle!

Dec. 22. If I am thus seemingly cold compared with my companion's warm, who knows but mine is a less transient glow, a steadier and more equable heat, like that of the earth in spring, in which the flowers spring and expand? It is not words that I wish to hear or

to utter, but relations that I seek to stand in; and it oftener happens, methinks, that I go away unmet, unrecognized, ungreeted in my offered relation, than that you are disappointed of words. If I can believe that we are related to one another as truly and gloriously as I have imagined, I ask nothing more, and words are not required to convince me of this. I am disappointed of relations, you of words.

I have seen, in the form, in the expression of face, of a child three years old, the tried magnanimity and grave nobility of ancient and departed worthies. Just saw a little Irish boy, come from the distant shanty in the woods over the bleak railroad to school this morning, take his last step from his last snow-drift on to the schoolhouse door-step, floundering still; saw not his face or his profile, only his mien, and imagined, saw clearly in imagination, his old-worthy face behind the sober visor of his cap. Ah! this little Irish boy, I know not why, revives to my mind the worthies of antiquity. He is not drawn, he never was drawn, in a willow wagon; he progresses by his own brave steps. Has not the world waited for such a generation? Here he condescends to his a-b-c without one smile, who has the lore of worlds uncounted in his brain. He speaks not of the adventures of the causeway. What was the bravery of Leonidas and his three hundred boys at the pass of Thermopylæ to this infant's? They but dared to die; he dares to live, — and take his "reward of merit," perchance without relaxing his face into a smile, that overlooks his unseen and unrewardable merits. Little Johnny Riordan, who faces cold and routs it like a Persian army,

who, yet innocent, carries in his knees the strength of a thousand Indras. That does not reward the thousandth part of his merit. While the charitable waddle about cased in furs, he, lively as a cricket, passes them on his way to school. I forget for the time Kossuth and his Hungarians. Here 's a Kossuth for you![1]

An innocent child is a man who has repented once for all, and is born again, — has entered into the joy of his Lord.

Almost the whole world is orthodox and looks upon you as in a state of nature. In conversation with people of more than average wit, I find that the common assumption is that they have experienced a new birth, but you are in a state of nature.

Dec. 23. It would give me such joy to know that a friend had come to see me, and yet that pleasure I seldom if ever experience.

It is a record of the mellow and ripe moments that I would keep. I would not preserve the husk of life, but the kernel.

When the cup of life is full and flowing over, preserve some drops as a specimen, sample. When the intellect enlightens the heart and the heart warms the intellect.

Thoughts will sometimes possess our heads when we are up and about our business which are the exact counterpart of the bad dreams which we sometimes have by night, and I think that the intellect is equally inert in both cases. Very frequently, no doubt, the thoughts men have are the consequence of something which they have

[1] [See pp. 241–244; also *Journal*, vol. ii, pp. 117, 118.]

eaten or done. Our waking *moods* and *humors* are our dreams, but whenever we are truly awake and serene, and healthy in all our senses, we have memorable visions. Who that takes up a book wishes for the report of the clogged bowels or the impure blood?

Yesterday afternoon I walked to the stone bridge over the Assabet, and thence down the river on the ice to the Leaning Hemlocks, and then crossed the other branch to the house. Do I not see two kinds of black alder, one blotched, the other lighter-colored, the former with many small berries crowded, the latter larger and single? Scared up partridges into the tops of the hemlocks, where they thought to conceal themselves.

Observed where a woodchopper had come to the river and cut a hole for water some days before. The river, frozen unexpectedly even, — but few open places, — had gone down since it froze, and the ice was accordingly bulged up over the rocks in its channel, with many fine cracks in all directions. It was a good opportunity to examine the fluviatile trees. I was struck by the amount of small interlaced roots — making almost a solid mass — of some red (?) oaks on the bank which the water had undermined, opposite Sam Barrett's. Observed by a wall beneath Nawshawtuct where many rabbits appeared to have played and nearly half a pint of dung was dropped in one pile on the snow.

This morning, when I woke, I found it snowing, the snow fine and driving almost horizontally, as if it had set in for a long storm, but a little after noon it ceased snowing and began to clear up, and I set forth for a walk. The snow which we have had for the last week or ten

days has been remarkably light and dry. It is pleasant walking in the woods now, when the sun is just coming out and shining on the woods freshly covered with snow. At a distance the oak woods look very venerable. A fine, hale, wintry aspect things wear, and the pines, all snowed up, even suggest comfort. Where boughs cross each other much snow is caught, which now in all woods is gradually tumbling down.

By half past three the sun is fairly out. I go to the Cliffs. There is a narrow ridge of snow, a white line, on the storm side of the stem of every exposed tree. I see that there is to be a fine, clear sunset, and make myself a seat in the snow on the Cliff to witness it. Already a few clouds are glowing like a golden sierra just above the horizon. From a low arch the clear sky has rapidly spread eastward over the whole heavens, and the sun shines serenely, and the air is still, and the spotless snow covers the fields. The snow-storm is over, the clouds have departed, the sun shines serenely, the air is still, a pure and trackless white napkin covers the ground, and a fair evening is coming to conclude all. Gradually the sun sinks, the air grows more dusky, and I perceive that if it were not for the light reflected from the snow it would be quite dark. The woodchopper has started for home. I can no longer distinguish the color of the red oak leaves against the snow, but they appear black. The partridges have come forth to bud on the apple trees. Now the sun has quite disappeared, but the afterglow, as I may call it, apparently the reflection from the cloud beyond which the sun went down on the thick atmosphere of the horizon, is unusually bright and lasting.

Long, broken clouds in the horizon, in the dun atmosphere, — as if the fires of day were still smoking there, — hang with red and golden edging like the saddle-cloths of the steeds of the sun. Now all the clouds grow black, and I give up to-night; but unexpectedly, half an hour later when I look out, having got home, I find that the evening star is shining brightly, and, beneath all, the west horizon is glowing red, — that dun atmosphere instead of clouds reflecting the sun, — and I detect, just above the horizon, the narrowest imaginable white sickle of the new moon.

Dec. 24. It spits snow this afternoon. Saw a flock of snowbirds on the Walden road. I see them so commonly when it is beginning to snow that I am inclined to regard them as a sign of a snow-storm. The snow bunting (*Emberiza nivalis*) methinks it is, so white and arctic, not the slate-colored. Saw also some pine grosbeaks, magnificent winter birds, among the weeds and on the apple trees; like large catbirds[1] at a distance, but, nearer at hand, some of them, when they flit by, are seen to have gorgeous heads, breasts, and rumps (?), with red or crimson reflections, more beautiful than a steady bright red would be. The note I heard, a rather faint and innocent whistle of two bars.

Now and long since the birds' nests have been full of snow.

I had looked in vain into the west for nearly half an hour to see a red cloud blushing in the sky. The few clouds were dark, and I had given up all to night, but

[1] Rice calls them winter larks. Perhaps he means another.

when I had got home and chanced to look out the window from the supper [table], I perceived that all the west horizon was glowing with a rosy border, and that dun atmosphere had been the cloud this time which made the day's adieus. But half an hour before, that dun atmosphere hung over all the western woods and hills, precisely as if the fires of the day had just been put out in the west, and the burnt territory was sending out volumes of dun and lurid smoke to heaven, as if Phaëton had again driven the chariot of the sun so near as to set fire to earth.

Dec. 25. Thursday. Via spruce swamp on Conantum to hilltop, returning across river over shrub oak plain to Cliffs.

A wind is now blowing the light snow which fell a day or two ago into drifts, especially on the lee, now the south, side of the walls, the outlines of the drifts corresponding to the chinks in the walls and the eddies of the wind. The snow glides, unperceived for the most part, over the open fields without rising into the air (unless the ground is elevated), until it reaches an opposite wall, which it sifts through and is blown over, blowing off from it like steam when seen in the sun. As it passes through the chinks, it does not drive straight onward, but curves gracefully upwards into fantastic shapes, somewhat like the waves which curve as they break upon the shore; that is, as if the snow that passes through a chink were one connected body, detained by the friction of its lower side. It takes the form of saddles and shells and porringers. It builds up a fantastic alabaster wall

behind the first, — a snowy sierra. It is wonderful what sharp turrets it builds up, — builds up, *i. e.* by accumulation though seemingly by attrition, though the curves upward to a point like the prows of ancient vessels look like sharp carving, or as if the material had been held before the blowpipe. So what was blown up into the air gradually sifts down into the road or field, and forms the slope of the sierra. Astonishingly sharp and thin overhanging eaves it builds, even this dry snow, where it has the least suggestion from a wall or bank, — less than a mason ever springs his brick from. This is the architecture of the snow. On high hills exposed to wind and sun, it curls off like the steam from a damp roof in the morning. Such sharply defined forms it takes as if the core had been the flames of gaslights.

I go forth to see the sun set. Who knows how it will set, even half an hour beforehand? whether it will go down in clouds or a clear sky? I feel that it is late when the mountains in the north and northwest have ceased to reflect the sun. The shadow is not partial but universal.

In a winter day the sun is almost all in all.

I witness a beauty in the form or coloring of the clouds which addresses itself to my imagination, for which you account scientifically to my understanding, but do not so account to my imagination. It is what it suggests and is the symbol of that I care for, and if, by any trick of science, you rob it of its symbolicalness, you do me no service and explain nothing. I, standing twenty miles off, see a crimson cloud in the horizon. You tell me it is a mass of vapor which absorbs all other rays and reflects the red, but that is nothing to the purpose, for

this red vision excites me, stirs my blood, makes my thoughts flow, and I have new and indescribable fancies, and you have not touched the secret of that influence. If there is not something mystical in your explanation, something unexplainable to the understanding, some elements of mystery, it is quite insufficient. If there is nothing in it which speaks to my imagination, what boots it? What sort of science is that which enriches the understanding, but robs the imagination? not merely robs Peter to pay Paul, but takes from Peter more than it ever gives to Paul? That is simply the way in which it speaks to the understanding, and that is the account which the understanding gives of it; but that is not the way it speaks to the imagination, and that is not the account which the imagination gives of it. Just as inadequate to a pure mechanic would be a poet's account of a steam-engine.

If we knew all things thus mechanically merely, should we know anything really?

It would be a truer discipline for the writer to take the least film of thought that floats in the twilight sky of his mind for his theme, about which he has scarcely one idea (that would be teaching his ideas how to shoot), faintest intimations, shadowiest subjects, make a lecture on this, by assiduity and attention get perchance two views of the same, increase a little the stock of knowledge, clear a new field instead of manuring the old; instead of making a lecture out of such obvious truths, hackneyed to the minds of all thinkers. We seek too soon to ally the perceptions of the mind to the

experience of the hand, to prove our gossamer truths practical, to show their connection with our every-day life (better show their distance from our every-day life), to relate them to the cider-mill and the banking institution. Ah, give me pure mind, pure thought! Let me not be in haste to detect the *universal law;* let me see more clearly a particular instance of it! Much finer themes I aspire to, which will yield no satisfaction to the vulgar mind, not one sentence for them. Perchance it may convince such that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy. Dissolve one nebula, and so destroy the nebular system and hypothesis. Do not seek expressions, seek thoughts to be expressed. By perseverance you get two views of the same rare truth.

That way of viewing things you know of, least insisted on by you, however, least remembered, — take that view, adhere to that, insist on that, see all things from that point of view. Will you let these intimations go unattended to and watch the door-bell or knocker? That is your text. Do not speak for other men; speak for yourself. They show you as in a vision the kingdoms of the world, and of all the worlds, but you prefer to look in upon a puppet-show. Though you should only speak to one kindred mind in all time, though you should not speak to one, but only utter aloud, that you may the more completely realize and live in the idea which contains the reason of your life, that you may build yourself up to the height of your conceptions, that you may remember your Creator in the days of your youth and justify His ways to man, that the end of life may not be its

amusement, speak — though your thought presupposes the non-existence of your hearers — thoughts that transcend life and death. What though mortal ears are not fitted to hear absolute truth! Thoughts that blot out the earth are best conceived in the night, when darkness has already blotted it out from sight.

We look upward for inspiration.

Dec. 26. I observed this afternoon that when Edmund Hosmer came home from sledding wood and unyoked his oxen, they made a business of stretching and scratching themselves with their horns and rubbing against the posts, and licking themselves in those parts which the yoke had prevented their reaching all day. The human way in which they behaved affected me even pathetically. They were too serious to be glad that their day's work was done; they had not spirits enough left for that. They behaved as a tired woodchopper might. This was to me a new phase in the life of the laboring ox. It is painful to think how they may sometimes be overworked. I saw that even the ox could be weary with toil.

Dec. 27. *Saturday.* Sunset from Fair Haven Hill. This evening there are many clouds in the west into which the sun goes down so that we have our visible or apparent sunset and red evening sky as much as fifteen minutes before the real sunset. You must be early on the hills to witness such a sunset, — by half past four at least. Then all the vales, even to the horizon, are full of a purple vapor, which half veils the distant moun-

tains, and the windows of undiscoverable farmhouses shine like an early candle or a fire. After the sun has gone behind a cloud, there appears to be a gathering of clouds around his setting, and for a few moments his light in the amber sky seems more intense, brighter, and purer than at noonday.

I think you never see such a brightness in the noonday heavens as in the western sky sometimes, just before the sun goes down in clouds, like the ecstasy which we [are] told sometimes lights up the face of a dying man. That is a *serene* or evening death, like the end of the day. Then, at last, through all the grossness which has accumulated in the atmosphere of day, is seen a patch of serene sky fairer by contrast with the surrounding dark than midday, and even the gross atmosphere of the day is gilded and made pure as amber by the setting sun, as if the day's sins were forgiven it. The man is blessed who every day is permitted to behold anything so pure and serene as the western sky at sunset, while revolutions vex the world.

There is no winter necessarily in the sky, though the snow covers the earth. The sky is always ready to answer to our moods; we can see summer there or winter. Snow and drifts on the earth; it swiftly descends from the heavens and leaves them pure. The heavens present, perhaps, pretty much the same aspect summer and winter.

It is remarkable that the sun rarely goes down without a cloud.

Venus — I suppose it is — is now the evening star, and very bright she is immediately after sunset in the early twilight.

Dec. 28. All day a drizzling rain, ever and anon holding up with driving mists. A January thaw. The snow rapidly dissolving; in all hollows a pond forming; unfathomable water beneath the snow. Went into Tommy Wheeler's house, where still stands the spinning-wheel, and even the loom, home-made. Great pitch pine timbers overhead, fifteen or sixteen inches in diameter, telling of the primitive forest here. The white pines look greener than usual in this gentle rain, and every needle has a drop at the end of it. There is a mist in the air which partially conceals them, and they seem of a piece with it. Some one has cut a hole in the ice at Jenny's Brook, and set a steel trap under water, and suspended a large piece of meat over it, for a bait for a mink, apparently.

Dec. 29. The sun just risen. The ground is almost entirely bare. The puddles are not skimmed over. It is warm as an April morning. There is a sound as of bluebirds in the air, and the cocks crow as in the spring. The steam curls up from the roofs and the ground. You walk with open cloak. It is exciting [to] behold the smooth, glassy surface of water where the melted snow has formed large puddles and ponds, and to see it running in the sluices. In the clear atmosphere I saw, far in the eastern horizon, the steam from the steam-engine, like downy clouds above the woods, I think even beyond Weston. By school-time you see the boys in the streets playing with the sluices, and the whole population is inspired with new life.

In the afternoon to Saw Mill Brook with W. E. C.

Snow all gone from Minott's hillside. The willow at the red house shines in the sun. The boys have come out under the hill to pitch coppers. Watts sits on his door-step. It is like the first of April. The wind is west. At the turnpike bridge, water stands a foot or two deep over the ice. Water spiders have come out and are skating against the stream. How much they depend on January thaws! Now for the frozen-thawed apples! This is the first chance they have had to thaw this winter. It feels as warm as in summer; you sit on any fence-rail and vegetate in the sun, and realize that the earth may produce peas again. Yet they say that this open and mild weather is unhealthy; that is always the way with them. How admirable it is that we can never foresee the weather, — that that is always novel! Yesterday nobody dreamed of to-day; nobody dreams of to-morrow. Hence the weather is ever the news. What a fine and measureless joy the gods grant us thus, letting us know nothing about the day that is to dawn! This day, yesterday, was as incredible as any other miracle. Now all creatures feel it, even the cattle chewing stalks in the barn-yards; and perchance it has penetrated even to the lurking-places of the crickets under the rocks.

The artist is at work in the Deep Cut. The telegraph harp sounds.

Dec. 30. *Tuesday. Mem.:* Go to the Deep Cut.[1]

The flies now crawl forth from the crevices all covered with dust, dreaming of summer, without life or energy enough to clean their wings.

[1] [See next date.]

This afternoon, being on Fair Haven Hill, I heard the sound of a saw, and soon after from the Cliff saw two men sawing down a noble pine beneath, about forty rods off. I resolved to watch it till it fell, the last of a dozen or more which were left when the forest was cut and for fifteen years have waved in solitary majesty over the sprout-land. I saw them like beavers or insects gnawing at the trunk of this noble tree, the diminutive manikins with their cross-cut saw which could scarcely span it. It towered up a hundred feet as I afterward found by measurement, one of the tallest probably in the township and straight as an arrow, but slanting a little toward the hillside, its top seen against the frozen river and the hills of Conantum. I watch closely to see when it begins to move. Now the sawers stop, and with an axe open it a little on the side toward which it leans, that it may break the faster. And now their saw goes again. Now surely it is going; it is inclined one quarter of the quadrant, and, breathless, I expect its crashing fall. But no, I was mistaken; it has not moved an inch; it stands at the same angle as at first. It is fifteen minutes yet to its fall. Still its branches wave in the wind, as if it were destined to stand for a century, and the wind soughs through its needles as of yore; it is still a forest tree, the most majestic tree that waves over Musketaquid. The silvery sheen of the sunlight is reflected from its needles; it still affords an inaccessible crotch for the squirrel's nest; not a lichen has forsaken its mast-like stem, its raking mast, — the hill is the hulk. Now, now 's the moment! The manikins at its base are fleeing from their crime. They have

dropped the guilty saw and axe. How slowly and majestically it starts! as if it were only swayed by a summer breeze, and would return without a sigh to its location in the air. And now it fans the hillside with its fall, and it lies down to its bed in the valley, from which it is never to rise, as softly as a feather, folding its green mantle about it like a warrior, as if, tired of standing, it embraced the earth with silent joy, returning its elements to the dust again. But hark! there you only saw, but did not hear. There now comes up a deafening crash to these rocks, advertising you that even trees do not die without a groan. It rushes to embrace the earth, and mingle its elements with the dust. And now all is still once more and forever, both to eye and ear.

I went down and measured it. It was about four feet in diameter where it was sawed, about one hundred feet long. Before I had reached it the axemen had already half divested it of its branches. Its gracefully spreading top was a perfect wreck on the hillside as if it had been made of glass, and the tender cones of one year's growth upon its summit appealed in vain and too late to the mercy of the chopper. Already he has measured it with his axe, and marked off the mill-logs it will make. And the space it occupied in upper air is vacant for the next two centuries. It is lumber. He has laid waste the air. When the fish hawk in the spring revisits the banks of the Musketaquid, he will circle in vain to find his accustomed perch, and the hen-hawk will mourn for the pines lofty enough to protect her brood. A plant which it has taken two centuries to

perfect, rising by slow stages into the heavens, has this afternoon ceased to exist. Its sapling top had expanded to this January thaw as the forerunner of summers to come. Why does not the village bell sound a knell? I hear no knell tolled. I see no procession of mourners in the streets, or the woodland aisles. The squirrel has leaped to another tree; the hawk has circled further off, and has now settled upon a new eyrie, but the woodman is preparing [to] lay his axe at the root of that also.

Dec. 31. The third warm day; now overcast and beginning to drizzle. Still it is inspiriting as the brightest weather. Though the sun surely is not a-going to shine, there is a latent light in the mist, as if there were more electricity than usual in the air. There are warm, foggy days in winter which excite us.

It reminds me, this thick, spring-like weather, that I have not enough valued and attended to the pure clarity and brilliancy of the winter skies. Consider in what respects the winter sunsets differ from the summer ones. Shall I ever in summer evenings see so celestial a reach of blue sky contrasting with amber as I have seen a few days since. The day sky in winter corresponds for clarity to the night sky, in which the stars shine and twinkle so brightly in this latitude.

I am too late, perhaps, to see the sand foliage in the Deep Cut; should have been there day before yesterday; it is now too wet and soft. Yet in some places it is perfect. I see some perfect leopards' paws.[1] These

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 336, 337; Riv. 470.]

things suggest that there is motion in the earth as well as on the surface; it lives and grows. It is warmed and influenced by the sun, just as my blood by my thoughts. I seem to see some of the life that is in the spring bud and blossom more intimately, nearer its fountainhead, the fancy sketches and designs of the artist. It is more simple and primitive growth; as if for ages sand and clay might have thus flowed into the forms of foliage, before plants were produced to clothe the earth. The earth I tread on is not a dead, inert mass. It is a body, has a spirit, is organic, and fluid to the influence of its spirit, and to whatever particle of that spirit is in me. She is not dead, but sleepeth. It is more cheering than the fertility and luxuriance of vineyards, this fundamental fertility near to the principle of growth. To be sure it is somewhat fœcal and stercoral.[1] So the poet's creative moment is when the frost is coming out in the spring, but, as in the case of some too easy poets, if the weather is too warm and rainy or long continued it becomes mere diarrhœa, mud and clay relaxed. The poet must not have something pass his bowels merely; that is women's poetry. He must have something pass his brain and heart and bowels, too, it may be, all together. So he gets delivered. There is no end to the fine bowels here exhibited, — heaps of liver, lights, and bowels. Have you no bowels? Nature has some bowels. And there again she is mother of humanity.[2] Concord is a worthier place to live in, the globe is a worthier place, for these creations, this slumbering life that may wake. Even the solid globe is permeated by the living

[1] [*Walden*, p. 340; Riv. 475.] [2] [*Ibid.*]

law. It is the most living of creatures. No doubt all creatures that live on its surface are but parasites.

I observed this afternoon the old Irishwoman at the shanty in the woods, sitting out on the hillside, bareheaded, in the rain and on the icy though thawing ground, knitting. She comes out, like the ground squirrel, at the least intimation of warmer weather. She will not have to go far to be buried, so close she lives to the earth, while I walk still in a greatcoat and under an umbrella. Such Irish as these are naturalizing themselves at a rapid rate, and threaten at last to displace the Yankees, as the latter have the Indians. The process of acclimation is rapid with them; they draw long breaths in the American sick-room. What must be the philosophy of life to that woman, ready to flow down the slope with the running sand! Ah, what would I not give for her point of view! She does not use any *th*'s in her style. Yet I fear that even she may have learned to lie.

There is a low mist in the woods. It is a good day to study lichens. The view so confined it compels your attention to near objects, and the white background reveals the disks of the lichens distinctly. They appear more loose, flowing, expanded, flattened out, the colors brighter for the damp. The round greenish-yellow lichens on the white pines loom through the mist (or are seen dimly) like shields whose devices you would fain read. The trees appear all at once covered with their crop of lichens and mosses of all kinds, — flat and tearful are some, distended by moisture. This is their solstice, and your eyes run swiftly through the mist to these things only. On every fallen twig, even,

that has lain under the snows, as well as on the trees, they appear erect and now first to have attained their full expansion. Nature has a day for each of her creatures, her creations. To-day it is an exhibition of lichens at Forest Hall, the livid green of some, the fruit of others. They eclipse the trees they cover. And the red, club-pointed (baobab-tree-like) on the stumps, the *erythrean* stumps! Ah, beautiful is decay! True, as Thales said, the world was made out of water. That is the principle of all things.

I do not lay myself open to my friends!? The owner of the casket locks it, and unlocks it. Treat your friends for what you know them to be. Regard no surfaces. Consider not what they did, but what they intended. Be sure, as you know them you are known of them again. Last night I treated my dearest friend ill. Though I could find some excuse for myself, it is not such excuse as under the circumstances could be pleaded in so many words. Instantly I blamed myself, and sought an opportunity to make atonement, but the friend avoided me, and, with kinder feelings even than before, I was obliged to depart. And now this morning I feel that it is too late to speak of the trifle, and, besides, I doubt now in the cool morning, if I have a right to suppose such intimate and serious relations as afford a basis for the apology I had conceived, for even magnanimity must ask this poor earth for a field. The virtues even wait for invitation. Yet I am resolved to know that one centrally, through thick and thin, and though we should be cold to one another, though we should never speak to one another, I will know that inward

and essential love may exist even under a superficial cold, and that the law of attraction speaks louder than words. My true relation this instant shall be my apology for my false relation the last instant. I made haste to cast off my injustice as scurf. I own it least of anybody, for I have absolutely done with it. Let the idle and wavering and apologizing friend appropriate it. Methinks our estrangement is only like the divergence of the branches which unite in the stem.

This night I heard Mrs. S—— lecture on womanhood. The most important fact about the lecture was that a woman said it, and in that respect it was suggestive. Went to see her afterward, but the interview added nothing to the previous impression, rather subtracted. She was a woman in the too common sense after all. You had to fire small charges: I did not have a finger in once, for fear of blowing away all her works and so ending the game. You had to substitute courtesy for sense and argument. It requires nothing less than a chivalric feeling to sustain a conversation with a lady. I carried her lecture for her in my pocket wrapped in her handkerchief; my pocket exhales cologne to this moment. The championess of woman's rights still asks you to be a ladies' man. I can't fire a salute, even, for fear some of the guns may be shotted. I had to unshot all the guns in truth's battery and fire powder and wadding only. Certainly the heart is only for rare occasions; the intellect affords the most unfailing entertainment. It would only do to let her feel the wind of the ball. I fear that to the last woman's lectures will demand mainly courtesy from man.

(To go on with walk, this written next morning.) How deceptive the size of a large pine! still, as you approach it, even within a rod or two, it looks only like a reasonable stick, fit for a string-piece, perchance, the average size of trees one foot in diameter, — big as a keg or a half-barrel, it may be, — fit for the sill or the beams of an old-fashioned house. This you think is a generous appreciation and allowance. Not till you stand close to its foot, upon one of its swelling insteps, and compare its diameter with the diameter of your own eyeballs, do you begin to discover its width. Stand by its side, and see how it shuts out a hemisphere from you. Why, it is as wide as a front door. What a slender arrow, a light shaft, now that you stand a rod or two off! What a ballista, a battering ram, a mighty vegetable monster, a cannon, near at hand! Now set a barrel, aye, a hogshead beside it. You apply your measures. The foot rule seems suddenly shrunk. Your umbrella is but half as long as it was.

The pine I saw fall yesterday measured to-day one hundred and five feet, and was about ninety-four years old. There was one still larger lying beside it, one hundred and fifteen feet long, ninety-six years old, four feet diameter the longest way. The tears were streaming from the sap-wood — about twenty circles — of each, pure amber or pearly tears.

Through the drizzling fog, now just before nightfall, I see from the Cliffs the dark cones of pine trees that rise above the level of the tree-tops, and can trace a few elm tree tops where a farmhouse hides beneath.

Denuded pines stand in the clearings with no old

cloak to wrap about them, only the apexes of their cones entire, telling a pathetic story of the companions that clothed them. So stands a man. It is clearing around him. He has no companions on the hills. The lonely traveller, looking up, wonders why he was left when his companions were taken.

IV

JANUARY, 1852

(ÆT. 34)

Jan. 1. Mr. Frost did not like Mrs. S——'s lecture last night; did not like what she said about the clergy. Said it was too *transcendental* for him. This is the profane swearing of such men.

I have observed that one mood is the natural critic of another. When possessed with a strong feeling on any subject foreign to the one I may be writing on, I know very well what of good and what of bad I have written on the latter. It looks to me now as it will ten years hence. My life is then earnest and will tolerate no makeshifts nor nonsense. What is tinsel or euphuism or irrelevant is revealed to such a touchstone. In the light of a strong feeling, all things take their places, and truth of every kind is seen for such. Now let me read my verses, and I will tell you if the god has had a hand in them. I wish to survey my composition for a moment from the least favorable point of view. I wish to be translated to the future, and look at my work as it were at a structure on the plain, to observe what portions have crumbled under the influence of the elements.

9.30 P. M. — To Fair Haven.

Moon little more than half full. Not a cloud in the

sky. It is a remarkably warm night for the season, the ground almost entirely bare. The stars are dazzlingly bright. The fault may be in my own barrenness, but methinks there is a certain poverty about the winter night's sky. The stars of higher magnitude are more bright and dazzling, and therefore appear more near and numerable, while those that appear indistinct and infinitely remote in the summer, imparting the impression of unfathomability to the sky, are scarcely seen at all. The front halls of heaven are so brilliantly lighted that they quite eclipse the more remote. The sky has fallen many degrees.

The river has risen and flooded the meadows again. The white pines, now seen against the moon, with their *single* foliage, look thin.

These are some of the differences between this and the autumn or summer nights: the stiffened glebe under my feet, the dazzle and seeming nearness of the stars, the duller gleam from ice on rivers and ponds, the white spots in the fields and streaks by the wall-sides where are the remains of drifts, yet unmelted. Perhaps the only thing that spoke to me on this walk was the bare, lichen-covered gray rock at the Cliff, in the moonlight, naked and almost warm as in summer.

I have so much faith in the power of truth to communicate itself, that I should not believe a friend if he should tell me that he had given credit to an unjust rumor concerning me. Suspect! Ah! yes, you may suspect a thousand things, but I well know that that which you suspect most confidently of all, is just the

truth. Your other doubts but flavor this your main suspicion; they are the condiments which, taken alone, do simply bite the tongue.

McKean has sawed another of the pines under Fair Haven. He says it made eighty-two feet in length of mill-logs, and was so straight that it would have made a first-rate mast eighty feet long. I told him that Nathan Hosmer had told me that he once helped saw down a pine three feet in diameter, that they sawed it clean through and it still stood on the stump, and it took two men to push it over. McKean could understand how this might be done by wedging. He says that he often runs his saw straight through a tree without wedges and without its pinching to within an eighth of an inch of the other side before it breaks. To do this you must begin on the side toward which the tree leans. Of course it does not lean any more so as to pinch the saw till you have got beyond the heart. It will then make room for itself and be relieved by the tipping of the tree. A green hand would begin on the other side and so split the tree up the middle.

The worst kind of *chigo*, or tick, to get under your skin is yourself in an irritable mood.

I believe it was Chalmers who said, speaking of Coleridge, that for his part he wanted ideas which he could see all round and not such as he must look at away up in the heavens. Such a man, one would say, would never look at the moon, because she never turns her other side to us, but holds it steadily toward the heavens beyond; and the light which comes from ideas

which have their orbit as distant from the earth, and which is no less cheering and enlightening to the benighted traveller than that of the moon and stars, is naturally reproached or nicknamed as moonshine by such. Ideas that soar above the earth cannot be seen all round, but ever have one side turned toward the heavens. They are moonshine, are they? Very well, then, do your night travelling when there is no moon to light you; but I will be thankful for the light that reaches me from the star of least magnitude. I will be thankful that I see so much as one side of a celestial idea, one side of the rainbow and the sunset sky, the *face* of God alone.[1]

Jan. 3. Oak-apples are a winter fruit. The leaves being gone, they are now conspicuous and shine in the sun. Some trees are quite full of them. Do they not suggest that all vegetable fruit is but the albumen about young animal life?

The ground has been bare for some days, and the weather warm. The river has risen, and now the meadows are frozen so as to bear, — a dark, thin, but rather opaque ice, as if covered with steam, — and I see now travelling, sweeping, coursing over it, in long winrows, fine pellets of snow, like cotton, fine, round, and dry, which I do not detect in the air before they fall. They lodge against a rail and make a small drift. So once more the skating will be spoiled.

A spirit sweeps the string of the telegraph harp, and strains of music are drawn out endlessly like the wire

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 324; Riv. 398, 399.]

itself. We have no need to refer music and poetry to Greece for an origin now. What becomes of the story of a tortoise-shell on the seashore now? The world is young, and music is its infant voice. I do not despair of such a world where you have only to stretch an ordinary wire from tree to tree to hear such strains drawn from it by New England breezes as make Greece and all antiquity seem poor in melody. Why was it made that man should be thrilled to his inmost being by the vibrating of a wire? Are not inspiration and ecstasy a more rapid vibration of the nerves swept by the inrushing excited spirit, whether zephyral or boreal in its character.

Jan. 4. To Fair Haven on the ice partially covered with snow.

The cracks in the ice showing a white cleavage. What is their law? Somewhat like foliage, but too rectangular, like the characters of some Oriental language. I feel as if I could get grammar and dictionary and go into it. They are of the form which a thin flake of ice takes in melting, somewhat rectangular with an irregular edge.

The pond is covered, — dappled or sprinkled, — more than half covered, with flat drifts or patches of snow which has lodged, of graceful curving outlines. One would like to skim over it like a hawk, and detect their law.

Jan. 5. To-day the trees are white with snow — I mean their stems and branches — and have the true

wintry look, on the storm side. Not till this has the winter come to the forest. They look like the small frostwork in the path and on the windows now, especially the oak woods at a distance, and you see better the form which their branches take. That is a picture of winter, and now you may put a cottage under them and roof it with snow-drifts, and let the smoke curl up amid the boughs in the morning.

Sitting on the Cliffs, I see plainly for the first time that the island in Fair Haven is the triangular point of a hill cut off, and forty or fifty rods west, on the mainland, I see the still almost raw and shelving edge of the bank, the raw sand-scar as if sodded over the past summer, — as a man cuts off a piece of pudding on his plate, — as if the intermediate portion of the hill had sunk and left a cranberry meadow.

It is with singular emotions that I stand on this Cliff and reflect in what age of the world this revolution, the evidence of which is of to-day, was evidenced by a raw and shelving sand-bank.

After this revolution how long came the settlers out of England to Musketaquid, came our political revolution and Concord Fight? After the natural elements were quiet, perchance.

It was a dark day, the heavens shut out with dense snow-clouds and the trees wetting me with the melting snow, when I went through Brown's wood on Fair Haven, which they are cutting off, and suddenly looking through the woods between the stems of the trees, I thought I saw an extensive fire in the western horizon. It was a bright coppery-yellow fair-weather cloud along

the edge of the horizon, gold with some alloy of copper, in such contrast with the remaining clouds as to suggest nothing less than fire. On that side the clouds which covered our day, low in the horizon with a dun and smoke-like edge, were rolled up like a curtain with heavy folds, revealing this further bright curtain beyond.

Jan. 7. Last evening, walked to Lincoln to lecture in a driving snow-storm, but the invisible moon gave light through the thickest of it. I observed how richly the snow lay on the cedars.

This afternoon, in dells of the wood and on the lee side of the woods, where the wind has not disturbed it, the snow still lies on the trees as richly as I ever saw it. It was just moist enough to stick. The pitch pines wear it best, their plumes hang down like the feathers of the ostrich or the tail of the cassowary, so purely white, — I am sorry that I cannot say *snowy* white, for in purity it is like nothing but itself. From contrast with the dark needles and stems of the trees, whiter than ever on the ground. Even the bare apple tree limbs and twigs in the hollows support each a little ridge of snow, a collar of snow, five or six inches high. The trees are bent under the weight into a great variety of postures, — arches, etc. Their branches and tops are so consolidated by the burden of snow, and they stand in such new attitudes, the tops often like canopies or parasols, agglomerated, that they remind me of the pictures of palms and other Oriental trees. In some places bent to the ground on each side, quite closing the path, bowed

not with grief but in a contented wintry sleep; looking often, when the tops or branches or plumes only are bent, like travellers facing the storm, whose heads and shoulders are covered with a white mantle and whose drapery falls about them revealing protuberances here and there, — forehead or elbows. Travellers bending to the storm under white mantles through which you can tell where their heads and elbows are. Sometimes the lower limbs of the pitch pine, divested of plumes, under such plumes and canopies, bear each their ridge of snow, crossing and interlacing each other like lattice-work, so that you cannot look more than a rod into the rich tracery. The sunlight, breaking forth at sundown on these snowed [*sic*] trees, is faint and uncertain like a sprinkling of red oak leaves, — a whitish glow on the snow and the oak leaves. I hardly know if it is shining on the oak leaves or not.

Now from the shanty plain I see the sun descending into the west. There is something new, a *snow*-bow, in the east, on the snow-clouds, merely a *white* bow, hardly any color distinguishable. But in the west what inconceivable crystalline purity of blue sky! (C. says it is color of a robin's egg); and I see feathery clouds on this ground, some travelling north, others directly in the opposite direction, though apparently close together. Some of these cloudlets are waifs and droppings from rainbows, clear rainbow through and through, spun out of the fibre of the rainbow, or, rather, as if the children of the west had been pulling rainbow (instead of tow) that had done service, old junk of rainbow, and cast it into flox.

And then such fantastic feathery scrawls of gauze-like vapor on this elysian ground! We never tire of the drama of sunset. I go forth each afternoon and look into the west a quarter of an hour before sunset, with fresh curiosity, to see what new picture will be painted there, what new panorama exhibited, what new dissolving views. Can Washington Street or Broadway show anything as good? Every day a new picture is painted and framed, held up for half an hour, in such lights as the Great Artist chooses, and then withdrawn, and the curtain falls.

And then the sun goes down, and long the afterglow gives light. And then the damask curtains glow along the western window. And now the first star is lit, and I go home.

Jan. 8. I notice that almost every track which I made yesterday in the snow — perhaps ten inches deep — has got a dead leaf in it, though none is to be seen on the snow around.

Even as early as 3 o'clock these winter afternoons the axes in the woods sound like nightfall, like the sound of a twilight labor.

Reading from my manuscripts to Miss Emerson this evening and using the word "god," in one instance, in perchance a merely heathenish sense, she inquired hastily in a tone of dignified anxiety, "Is that god spelt with a little *g*?" Fortunately it was. (I had brought in the word "god" without any solemnity of voice or connection.) So I went on as if nothing had happened.

I perceive that the livid lettuce-leaved lichen which I gathered the other day has dried almost an ash or satin, with no green about [it], — has bleached.

Jan. 9. The sky shut out by snow-clouds. It spits a little snow and then holds up. Where a path has been shovelled through drifts in the road, and the cakes of snow piled up, I see little azures, little heavens, in the crannies and crevices. The deeper they are, and the larger masses they are surrounded by, the darker-blue they are. Some are a very light blue with a tinge of green. Methinks I oftenest see this when it is snowing. At any rate the atmosphere must be in a peculiar state. Apparently the snow absorbs the other rays and reflects the blue. It has strained the air, and only the blue rays have passed through the sieve. Is, then, the blue water of Walden snow-water? I see the heaven hiding in nooks and crevices in the snow. Into every track which the teamster makes, this elysian, empyrean atmosphere rushes. The blue of my eye sympathizes with this blue in the snow.

The great pine woods have a peculiar appearance this afternoon. This rather fine snow has lodged in their limbs and given them a grayish look, but as it lies thicker along the core of the limb, it has the appearance, at a distance, of dim white lines lying at various angles like a vast network over the woods, or, rather, like cobwebs seen on the grass in summer mornings. A kind of film over them.

I never saw the pitch pines better snowed up. They look like Chinese pagodas.

"The majestic prerogative which Linnæus was possessed of," says Stoever, "to confer titles in the vegetable kingdom," did not escape the criticism of Haller, who says: "We would reserve all those garlands for those alone who are real and experienced botanists. Nor would we ever assign such a denomination to the mere hopes conceived of men who have not passed the ordeal of merit."

Jan. 11. What need to travel? There are no sierras equal to the clouds in the sunset sky. And are not these substantial enough? In a low or level country, perchance, the forms of the clouds supply the place of mountains and precipices to the eye, the grosser atmosphere makes a mountainous country in the sky.

The glory of these afternoons, though the sky may be mostly overcast, is in the ineffably clear blue, or else pale greenish-yellow, patches of sky in the west just before sunset. The whole cope of heaven seen at once is never so elysian. Windows to heaven, the heavenward windows of the earth. The end of the day is truly Hesperian.

R. W. E. showed me yesterday a letter from H. Greenough, the sculptor, on architecture, which he liked very much. Greenough's idea was to make architectural ornaments have a core of truth, a necessity and hence a beauty. All very well, as I told R. W. E., from Greenough's point of view, but only a little better than the common dilettantism.[1] I was afraid I should say hard things if I said more.

[1] [*Walden*, p. 51; Riv. 75.]

We sometimes find ourselves living fast, — unprofitably and coarsely even, — as we catch ourselves eating our meals in unaccountable haste. But in one sense we cannot live too leisurely. Let me not live as if time was short. Catch the pace of the seasons; have leisure to attend to every phenomenon of nature, and to entertain every thought that comes to you. Let your life be a leisurely progress through the realms of nature, even in guest-quarters.

This reminds me that the old Northman kings did in fact board round a good part of the time, as schoolmasters sometimes with us.

But as for Greenough, I felt as if it was dilettantism, and he was such a reformer in architecture as Channing in social matters. He began at the cornice. It was only how to put a core of truth within the ornaments, that every sugar-plum might in fact have an almond or carroway seed in it, and not how the inhabitant, the indweller, might be true and let the ornaments take care of themselves. He seemed to me to lean over the cornice and timidly whisper this half truth to the rude indwellers, who really knew it more interiorly than he. What of architectural beauty I now see, I know has gradually grown from within outward, out of the character and necessities of the indweller and builder, without even a thought for mere ornament, but an unconscious nobleness and truthfulness of character and life; and whatever additional beauty of this kind is destined to be produced will be preceded and accompanied, aye, created, by a like unconscious beauty of life. One of the most beautiful buildings in this country is a logger's

hut in the woods, and equally beautiful will be the citizen's suburban box, when the life of the indweller shall be as simple and as agreeable to the imagination, and there is as little straining after effect in the style of his dwelling. Much it concerns a man, forsooth, how a few sticks are slanted under him or over him, what colors are daubed upon his box! One man says, in his despair, "Take up a handful of the earth at your feet, and paint your house that color!" What an abundance of leisure he must have on his hands! An enterprise to improve the style of cottage architecture! Grow your own house, I say. Build it after an Orphean fashion. When R. W. E. and Greenough have got a few blocks finished and advertised, I will look at them. When they have got my ornaments ready I will wear them. What do you take up a handful of dirt for? Why don't you paint your house with your blood? with your sweat? Thin not the paint with *spirits* of turpentine. There's a deal of nonsense abroad.[1]

The question is not where did the traveller go? what places did he see? — it would be difficult to choose between places — but who was the traveller? how did he travel? how genuine an experience did he get? For travelling is, in the main, like as if you stayed at home, and then the question is how do you live and conduct yourself at home? What I mean is that it might be hard to decide whether I would travel to Lake Superior, or Labrador, or Florida. Perhaps none would be worth the while, if I went by the usual mode. But if I travel in a simple, primitive, original manner, standing in a

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 51–53; Riv. 75–78.]

truer relation to men and nature, travel away from the old and commonplace, get some honest experience of life, if only out of my feet and homesickness, then it becomes less important whither I go or how far. I so see the world from a new and more commanding point of view. Perhaps it is easier to live a true and natural life while travelling, — as one can move about less awkwardly than he can stand still.

Jan. 12. *Monday.* C. says that he studied lichens a little while, but he found that if you pursued that study you must give up man. It was so thin, and there was so little of man in it! Why, the whole of it was n't more than an inch thick.

He went to hear Noggs [?] the other night. It was the poorest lecture he ever heard. Did n't know why he did n't come out. But then he found himself in a handsome hall well lighted and warmed, and thought it would be cheaper to spend the evening there than to go home.

I sometimes think that I may go forth and walk hard and earnestly, and live a more substantial life and get a glorious experience; be much abroad in heat and cold, day and night; live more, expend more atmospheres, be weary often, etc., etc. But then swiftly the thought comes to me, Go not so far out of your way for a truer life; keep strictly onward in that path alone which your genius points out. Do the things which lie nearest to you, but which are difficult to do. Live a purer, a more thoughtful and laborious life, more true to your friends and neighbors, more noble and mag-

nanimous, and that will be better than a wild walk. To live in relations of truth and sincerity with men is to dwell in a frontier country. What a wild and unfrequented wilderness that would be! What Saguenays of magnanimity that might be explored! Men talk about travelling this way or that, as if seeing were all in the eyes, and a man could sufficiently report what he stood bodily before, when the seeing depends ever on the being. All report of travel is the report of victory or defeat, of a contest with every event and phenomenon and how you came out of it. A blind man who possesses inward truth and consistency will see more than one who has faultless eyes but no serious and laborious astronomer to look through them. As if the eyes were the only part of a man that travelled! Men convert their property into cash, ministers fall sick to obtain the assistance of their parishes, all chaffer with sea-captains, etc., as if the whole object were to get conveyed to some part of the world a pair of eyes merely. A telescope conveyed to and set up at the Cape of Good Hope at great expense, and only a Bushman to look through it. Nothing like a little internal activity called life — if it were only walking much in a day — to keep the eyes in good order; no such collyrium.

Jan. 13. James Wood, Jr., told me this afternoon of a white pine in Carlisle which the owner was offered thirty dollars for and refused. He had bought the lot for the sake of the tree, which he left standing.

Here I am on the Cliffs at half past three or four o'clock. The snow more than a foot deep over all the

land. Few if any leave the beaten paths. A few clouds are floating overhead, downy and dark. Clear sky and bright sun, and yet no redness. Remarkable, yet admirable, moderation that this should be confined to the morning and evening. Greeks were they who did it. A mother-o'-pearl tint is the utmost they will give you at midday, and this but rarely. Singular enough, twenty minutes later, looking up, I saw a long, light-textured cloud stretching from north to south, with a dunnish mass and an enlightened border, with its under edge toward the west all beautiful mother-o'-pearl, as remarkable as a rainbow, stretching over half the heavens; and underneath it, in the west, were flitting mother-o'-pearl clouds, which change their loose-textured form and melt rapidly away, never any so fast, even while I write. Before I can complete this sentence, I look up and they are gone, like smoke or rather the steam from the engine in the winter air. Even a considerable cloud, like a fabulous Atlantis or unfortunate isle in the Hesperian sea, is dissolved and dispersed in a minute or two, and nothing is left but the pure ether. Then another comes by magic, is born out of the pure blue empyrean, with beautiful mother-o'-pearl tints, where not a shred of vapor was to be seen before, not enough to stain a glass or polished steel blade. It grows more light and porous; the blue deeps are seen through it here and there; only a few flocks are left; and now these too have disappeared, and no one knows whither it is gone. You are compelled to look at the sky, for the earth is invisible.

Would not snow-drifts be a good study, — their

philosophy and poetry? Are they not worthy of a chapter? Are they always built up, or not rather carved out of the heaps of snow by the wind passing through the chinks in the walls? I do not see yet but they are builded. They are a sort of ripple-marks which the atmospheric sea makes on the snow-covered bottom.

Why can't I go to his office and talk with James Wood and learn his facts? But I should impose a certain restraint on him. We are strictly confined to our men; to whom we give liberty. I saw him with E. Wood snaking trees out of the woods on Fair Haven, — rude Northman work, with their chains and skids, in which Elijah Wood took the lead. If a tree stood in the way it was cut down, and pushed aside as it fell that it might not strike the oxen, though it might scare the horse, who began to dash through the woods with his rattling harness on, reckless and horse-like, ready to harm himself if not others, instinctively apprehending harm from that operation, — ready to impale himself upon the first stake and expose his bloody bowels to the air and spoil that piece of workmanship that he is, — a ghastly sight. So little prudence have horses, like some men. I knew one once, tied to a post, that, when a cannon [was] fired, reared and came down upon the post's sharp top, which pierced clean through and came out at his back, impaling him; and so he met his fate, and his equine spirit departed. As reckless as a horse that is "started."

We forget to strive and aspire, to do better ever than is expected of us. I cannot stay to be congratulated. I would leave the world behind me. We must with-

draw from our flatterers, even from our friends. They drag us down. It is rare that we use our thinking faculty as resolutely as an Irishman his spade. To please our friends and relatives we turn out our silver ore in cartloads, while we neglect to work our mines of gold known only to ourselves far up in the Sierras, where we pulled up a bush in our mountain walk, and saw the glittering treasure. Let us return thither. Let it be the price of our freedom to make that known.

Jan. 14. When I see the dead stems of the tansy, goldenrod, johnswort, asters, hardhack, etc., etc., rising above the snow by the roadside, sometimes in dense masses, which carry me back in imagination to their green summer life, I put faintly a question which I do not yet hear answered, Why stand they there? Why should the dead corn-stalks occupy the field longer than the green and living did? Many of them are granaries for the birds. It suggests that man is not an annual. He sees the annual plants wither. Nor does his sap cease to flow in the winter as does that of the trees, though, perhaps, even he may be slightly dormant at that season. It is to most a season to some extent of inactivity. He lays up his stores, and is perhaps a little chilled. On the approach of spring there is an increased flow of spirits, of blood, in his veins.

Here is a dense mass of dry tansy stems, attached still to the same roots which sustained them in summer, but what an interval between these and those. Here are no yellow disks; here are no green leaves; here is no strong odor to remind some of funerals.

Here is a change as great as can well be imagined. Bare, brown, scentless stalks, with the dry heads still adhering. Color, scent, and flavor gone.

We are related to all nature, animate and inanimate, and accordingly we share to some extent the nature of the dormant creatures. We all feel somewhat confined by the winter; the nights are longer, and we sleep more. We also wear more clothes. Yet the thought is not less active; perhaps it is more so.

What an effect the sight of green grass in the winter has on us! as at the spring by the Corner road.

Clouds are our mountains, and the child who had lived in a plain always and had never seen a mountain would find that he was prepared for the sight of them by his familiarity with clouds.

This dark, dull veil which shuts out the sky makes a favorable light and a frame under which to view those sailing island clouds in the clearer west.

I love to see now a cock of deep-reddish meadow-hay full of ferns and other meadow plants of the coarsest kind. My imagination supplies the green and the hum of bees. What a memento of summer such a haycock! To stand beside a haycock covered with snow in winter, through which the dry meadow plants peep out! And yet our hopes survive.

The snow flowing over the walls and across the road looks like a mist before me. In some places the wind passing through the chinks of the walls appears to have burst or cut through old snow-heaps, and so carved out these fantastic forms.[1]

[1] *Vide* forward to the 17th [p. 199].

Standing on the hill on the Baker Farm to-day, the level shrub oak plain under Fair Haven appeared as if Walden and other smaller ponds, and perhaps Fair Haven, had anciently sunk down in it, and the Cliffs been pushed up, for the level is continued in many cases even over extensive hollows. The shrub oaks here have lost their leaves, *i. e.* the small scrubby kind on this hill. I can see at a distance above the level of the snow a few bushes and grasses which mark the edge of the river. They seem to write the word *rivus* there. That is all or most to indicate that there is a river there. It is betrayed by that thin sedgy and willowy line or border marking the snow yonder.

As usual, there was no blueness in the ruts and crevices in the snow to-day. What kind of atmosphere does this require? When I observed it the other day, it was a rather moist air, some snow falling, the sky completely overcast, and the weather not very cold. It is one of the most interesting phenomena of the winter.

I noticed to-night, about sundown, that the clouds in the eastern horizon were the deepest indigo-blue of any I ever saw. Commencing with a pale blue or slate in the west, the color deepened toward the east.

The Governor, Bout*well* (?), lectured before the Lyceum to-night. Quite democratic. He wore no badge of his office. I believe that not even his brass buttons were official, but, perchance, worn with some respect to his station. If he could have divested himself a little more completely in his tone and manner of a sense of the dignity which belonged to his office, it would have been better still.

Jan. 15. We have heard a deal about English comfort. But may you not trace these stories home to some wealthy Sardanapalus who was able to pay for obsequious attendance and for every luxury? How far does it describe merely the tact and selfishness of the wealthy class? Ask the great mass of Englishmen and travellers, whose vote alone is conclusive, concerning the comfort they enjoyed in second and third class accommodations in steamboats and railroads and eating and lodging houses. Lord Somebody-or-other may have made himself comfortable, but the very style of his living makes it necessary that the great majority of his countrymen should be uncomfortable.

Are the second-class cars, the second-class accommodations on board steamboats, etc., *i. e.* the only class that can be compared with our own, remarkable for their comfort?

I do not know but the poet is he who generates poems. By continence he rises to creation on a higher level, a supernatural level.

When King Olaf the Saint was about to fight with the bonders to recover his lost kingdom, his scalds, who stood about him, composed songs about the events which would soon be taking place. Thormod's song concluded thus, —

> "One viking cheer! — then, stead of words,
> We'll speak with our death-dealing swords."

"These songs," says the chronicler, "were immediately got by heart by the army." Surely the scald's office was a significant and an honorable one then.

"This night the king lay with his army around him

on the field, — and lay long awake in prayer to God, and slept but little. Towards morning a slumber fell on him, and when he awoke daylight was shooting up. The king thought it too early to awaken the army, and asked where Thormod the scald was. Thormod was at hand, and asked what was the king's pleasure. 'Sing us a song,' said the king. Thormod raised himself up, and sang so loud that the whole army could hear him. He began to sing the old Biarkamal [composed and sung by Biarke before an old battle].[1]

. . . . . .

"Then the troops awoke, and when the song was ended the people thanked him for it; and it pleased many, as it was suitable to the time and occasion, and they called it the house-carle's whet."

For the first time this winter I notice snow-fleas this afternoon in Walden Wood. Wherever I go they are to be seen, especially in the deepest ruts and foot-tracks. Their number is almost infinite. It is a rather warm and moist afternoon, and feels like rain. I suppose that some peculiarity in the weather has called them forth from the bark of the trees.

It is good to see Minott's hens pecking and scratching the ground. What never-failing health they suggest! Even the sick hen is so naturally sick — like a green leaf turning to brown. No wonder men love to have hens about them and hear their creaking note. They are even laying eggs from time to time still — the undespairing race!

[1] [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

Minott was telling me to-day about his going across lots on snow-shoes. Why do they not use them now? He thinks the snows are not so deep.

It is a good school the farmers' sons go to these afternoons, loading and hauling great mill-logs bigger than any cannon, — a sort of battle in the forest. I think there must be an excitement derived from their labor such as they cannot tell. After reading of the life and battles of the Northmen in Snorro Sturleson's Chronicle, these labors most remind me of that. Some of these logs are for pumps; most are for boards and timbers and spiles for bridges. I met one old pupil of mine stretched at his length upon a vast ballista, or battering-ram, of a log, while one yoke and loaded sled went on alone before and another followed behind. How they renew and wear out the paths through the woods! They think I'm loafing. I think they are drudging for gain. But no doubt our employment is more alike than we suspect, and we are each serving the great Master's ends more than our own. I have my work in the woods where I meet them, though my logs do not go to the same mill. I make a different use of skids. These men, too, who are sledding wood and sawing the logs into lengths in the woods, appear to me employed more after the old Northman fashion than the mechanics in their shops or the merchants behind their counters. There are many more men now in the woods than in summer.

The weather has been moderate for a fortnight. The overlapping snow-drifts by the path-sides remind me of some marble tombs and carving I have seen. I see where from time to time the teamster has laid his

whip in them. He stains the spotless purity of the snow with his tobacco-juice.

In an account of a Chinese funeral, it is said the friends who attended "observed no particular order in their march." That seems a more natural and fitter way, more grief-like. The ranks should be broken. What must be the state of morals in that country where custom requires the chief mourner to put on the outward signs of extreme grief when he does not feel it, to throw himself on the ground and sob and howl though not a tear is shed, and require the support of others as he walks! What refuge can there be for truth in such a country?

Jan. 16. I see that to some men their relation to mankind is all-important. It is fatal in their eyes to outrage the opinions and customs of their fellow-men. Failure and success are, therefore, never proved by them by absolute and universal tests. I feel myself not so vitally related to my fellow-men. I impinge on them but by a point on one side. It is not a Siamese-twin ligature that binds me to them. It is unsafe to defer so much to mankind and the opinions of society, for these are always and without exception heathenish and barbarous, seen from the heights of philosophy. A wise man sees as clearly the heathenism and barbarity of his own countrymen as those of the nations to whom his countrymen send missionaries. The Englishman and American are subject to equally many national superstitions with the Hindoo and Chinese. My countrymen are to me foreigners. I have but little

more sympathy with them than with the mob of India or of China.

All nations are remiss in their duties and fall short of their standards. Madame Pfeiffer says of the Parsees, or Fire-Worshippers, in Bombay, who should all have been on hand on the esplanade to greet the first rays of the sun, that she found only a few here and there, and some did not make their appearance till 9 o'clock.

I see no important difference between the assumed gravity and the bought funeral sermon of the parish clergyman and the howlings and strikings of the breast of the hired mourning women of the East.

Bill Wheeler had two clumps for feet and progressed slowly, by short steps, having frozen his feet once, as I understood. Him I have been sure to meet once in five years, progressing into the town on his stubs, holding the middle of the road as if he drove an invisible herd before him, especially on a military day, — out of what confines, whose hired man having been, I never knew, — in what remote barn having quartered all these years. He seemed to belong to a different caste from other men, and reminded me of both the Indian Pariah and martyr. I understood that somebody was found to give him his drink for the few chores he could do. His meat was never referred to, he had so sublimed his life. One day since this, not long ago, I saw in my walk a kind of shelter such as woodmen might use, in the woods by the Great Meadows, made of meadow-hay cast over a rude frame. Thrusting my head in at

a hole, as I am wont to do in such cases, I found Bill Wheeler there curled up asleep on the hay, who, being suddenly wakened from a sound sleep, rubbed his eyes and inquired if I found any game, thinking I was sporting. I came away reflecting much on that man's life, — how he communicated with none; how now, perchance, he did chores for none; how low he lived, perhaps from a deep principle, that he might be some mighty philosopher, greater than Socrates or Diogenes, simplifying life, returning to nature, having turned his back on towns; how many things he had put off, — luxuries, comforts, human society, even his feet, — wrestling with his thoughts. I felt even as Diogenes when he saw the boy drinking out of his hands, and threw away his cup. Here was one who went alone, did no work, and had no relatives that I knew of, was not ambitious that I could see, did not depend on the good opinion of men. Must he not see things with an impartial eye, disinterested, as a toad observes the gardener? Perchance here is one of a sect of philosophers, the only one, so simple, so abstracted in thought and life from his contemporaries, that his wisdom is indeed foolishness to them. Who knows but in his solitary meadow-hay bunk he indulges, in thought, only in triumphant satires on men? Who knows but here is a superiority to literature and such things, unexpressed and inexpressible? Who has resolved to humble and mortify himself as never man was humbled and mortified. Whose very vividness of perception, clear knowledge, and insight have made him dumb, leaving no common consciousness and ground of parlance with

his kind, — or, rather, his unlike kindred! Whose news plainly is not my news nor yours. I was not sure for a moment but here was a philosopher who had left far behind him the philosophers of Greece and India, and I envied him his advantageous point of view. I was not to be deceived by a few stupid words, of course, and apparent besottedness. It was his position and career that I contemplated.

Channing has great respect for McKean, he stands on so low a level. Says he's great for conversation. He never says anything, hardly answers a question, but keeps at work; never exaggerates, nor uses an exclamation, and does as he agrees to. He appears to have got his shoulder to the wheel of the universe. But the other day he went greater lengths with me, as he and Barry were sawing down a pine, both kneeling of necessity. I said it was wet work for the knees in the snow. He observed, looking up at me, "We pray without ceasing."

But to return to Bill. I would have liked to know what view he took of life. A month or two after this, as I heard, he was found dead among the brush over back of the hill, — so far decomposed that his coffin was carried to his body and it was put into it with pitchforks. I have my misgivings still that he may have died a Brahmin's death, dwelling at the roots of trees at last, and been absorbed into the spirit of Brahm; though I have since been assured that he suffered from disappointed love, — was what is called love-cracked, — than which can there be any nobler suffering, any fairer death, for a human creature? — that that made

him to drink, froze his feet, and did all the rest for him. Why have not the world the benefit of his long trial?

Jan. 17. One day two young women — a Sunday — stopped at the door of my hut and asked for some water. I answered that I had no cold water but I would lend them a dipper.[1] They never returned the dipper, and I had a right to suppose that they came to steal. They were a disgrace to their sex and to humanity. Pariahs of the moral world. Evil spirits that thirsted not for water but threw the dipper into the lake. Such as Dante saw. What the lake to them but liquid fire and brimstone? They will never know peace till they have returned the dipper. In all the worlds this is decreed.

"Evergreens" would be a good title for some of my things, — or "Gill-go-over-the-Ground," or "Wintergreen," or "Checkerberry," or "Usnea Lichens," etc., etc. "Iter Canadense."

One day an inoffensive, simple-minded pauper from the almshouse, who, with others, I often saw used as fencing-stuff, standing or sitting on a bushel in the fields to keep cattle from straying, visited me, and expressed a wish to live as I did. He told me in the simplest manner (and therefore quite superior to anything that is called humility — it was too simple and truthful for that) that he was "deficient in intellect." These were his words. The Lord had made him so, and yet he supposed that the Lord cared for him as much as for another. Said he: "I have always been so from my childhood; I never had much mind. It was the Lord's

[1] [See *Walden*, p. 167; Riv. 234.]

will, I suppose. I am weak in the head. I was not like other children." I have rarely been so fortunate as to meet a fellow-man on such promising ground. It was so solemnly true all that he said.[1]

The other day, the 14th, as I was passing the further Garfield house beyond Holden's, with my pantaloons, as usual, tucked into my boots (there was no path beyond Holden's), I heard some persons in Garfield's shed, but did not look round, and when I had got a rod or two beyond, I heard some one call out impudently from the shed, quite loud, something like "Holloa, mister! what do you think of the walking?" I turned round directly, and saw three men standing in the shed. I was resolved to discomfit them, — that they should prove their manhood, if they had any, and find something to say, though they had nothing before, that they should make amends to the universe by feeling cheap. They should either say to my face and eye what they had said to my back, or they should feel the meanness of having to change their tone. So I called out, looking at one, "Do you wish to speak to me, sir?" No answer. So I stepped a little nearer and repeated the question, when one replied, "Yes, sir." So I advanced with alacrity up the path they had shovelled. In the meanwhile one ran into the house. I thought I had seen the nearest one [before]. He called me by name, faintly and with hesitation, and held out his hand half unconsciously, which I did not decline, and I inquired gravely if he wished to say anything to me. He could only wave me to the other and

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 167, 168; Riv. 235, 236.]

mutter, "My brother." I approached *him* and repeated the question. He looked as if he were shrinking into a nutshell; a pitiable object he was. He looked away from me while he began to frame some business, some surveying, that he might wish to have done. I saw that he was drunk, that his brother was ashamed of him, and I turned my back on him in the outset of this indirect but drunken apology.

When Madame Pfeiffer arrived in Asiatic Russia, she felt the necessity of wearing other than a travelling dress, when she went to meet the authorities, for, as she remarks, she "was now in a civilized country, where . . . people are judged of by their clothes." This is another barbarous trait.[1]

It seemed that from such a basis as the poor weak-headed pauper had laid, — such a basis of truth and frankness, — an intercourse might go forward to something better than the intercourse of sages.[2]

It was on the 4th of July [3] that I put a few articles of furniture into a hay-rigging, some of which I had made myself, and commenced housekeeping.

There is the world-wide fact that, from the mass of men, the appearance of wealth, dress, and equipage alone command respect. They who yield it are the heathen who need to have missionaries sent to them; [4] and they who cannot afford to live and travel but in this *respectable* way are, if possible, more pitiable still.

In proportion as I have celestial thoughts, is the necessity for me to be out and behold the western sky

[1] [*Walden*, p. 25; Riv. 38.]
[2] [*Walden*, p. 168; Riv. 236.]
[3] [See *Walden*, p. 94; Riv. 133.]
[4] [*Walden*, p. 25; Riv. 38.]

before sunset these winter days. That is the symbol of the unclouded mind that knows neither winter nor summer. What is your thought like? That is the hue, that the purity, and transparency, and distance from earthly taint of my inmost mind, for whatever we see without is a symbol of something within, and that which is farthest off is the symbol of what is deepest within. The lover of contemplation, accordingly, will gaze much into the sky. Fair thoughts and a serene mind make fair days. The rainbow is the symbol of the triumph which succeeds to a grief that has tried us to our advantage, so that at last we can smile through our tears. It is the aspect with which we come out of the house of mourning. We have found our relief in tears. As the skies appear to a man, so is his mind. Some see only clouds there; some, prodigies and portents; some rarely look up at all; their heads, like the brutes', are directed toward earth. Some behold there serenity, purity, beauty ineffable. The world run to see the panorama, when there is a panorama in the sky which few go out to see.

Methinks there might be a chapter, when I speak of hens in the thawy days and spring weather on the chips, called "Chickweed" or "Plantain."

To seagoing men the very mountains are but boats turned upside down, as the Northmen in Norway speak of the "keel-ridge of the country," *i. e.* the ridge of the mountains which divide the waters flowing east and west[1] — as if they were a boat turned bottom up.

Those western vistas through clouds to the sky show

[1] [See *Journal*, vol. iv, p. 353.]

the clearest heavens, clearer and more elysian than if the whole sky is comparatively free from clouds, for then there is wont to be a vapor more generally diffused, especially near the horizon, which, in cloudy days, is absorbed, as it were, and collected into masses; and the vistas are clearer than the unobstructed cope of heaven.

The endless variety in the forms and texture of the clouds! — some fine, some coarse grained. I saw to-night overhead, stretching two thirds across the sky, what looked like the backbone, with portions of the ribs, of a fossil monster. Every form and creature is thus shadowed forth in vapor in the heavens.

Saw a teamster coming up the Boston road this afternoon, sitting on his load, which was bags of corn or salt, apparently, behind two horses and beating his hands for warmth. He finally got off and walked behind, to make his blood circulate faster, and I saw that he was a large man. But when I came near him, I found that he was a monstrous man and dwarfed all whom he stood by, so that I did not know whether he was large or they were small. Yet, though he stood so high, he stooped considerably, more than anybody I think of, and he wore a flat glazed cap to conceal his height, and when he got into the village he sat down on his bags again. I heard him remark to a boy that it was a cold day, and it was; but I wondered that he should feel the cold so sensibly, for I thought it must take a long time to cool so large a body.

I learned that it was Kimball of Littleton, that probably he was not twenty. The family was not *large*.

Wild, who took the census, said so, and that his sister said he could n't do much, — health and strength not much. It troubled him that he was so large, for people looked at him. There is at once something monstrous, in the bad sense, suggested by the sight of such a man. Great size is inhuman. It is as if a man should be born with the earth attached to him. I saw him standing up on a sled, talking with the driver, while his own team went on ahead; and I supposed from their comparative height that his companion was sitting, but he proved to be standing. Such a man is so much less human; that is what may make him sad.

Those old Northmen were not like so many men in these days, whom you can pass your hand through because they have not any backbone. When Asmund was going to kill Harek of Thiottö with a thin hatchet, King Magnus said, "'Rather take this axe of mine.' It was thick, and made like a club. 'Thou must know, Asmund,' added he, 'that there are hard bones in the old fellow.'" Asmund struck Harek on the head, and gave him his death-wound, but when he returned to the king's house, it appeared that "the whole edge of the axe was turned with the blow."

It appears to me that at a very early age the mind of man, perhaps at the same time with his body, ceases to be elastic. His intellectual power becomes something defined and limited. He does not think expansively, as he would stretch himself in his growing days. What was flexible sap hardens into heart-wood, and there is no further change. In the season of youth,

methinks, man is capable of intellectual effort and performance which surpass all rules and bounds; as the youth lays out his whole strength without fear or prudence and does not feel his limits. It is the transition from poetry to prose. The young man can run and leap; he has not learned exactly how far, he knows no limits. The grown man does not exceed his daily labor. He has no strength to waste.

Jan. 18. *Sunday.* E. Hosmer tells me that his daughter, walking with Miss Mary Emerson to some meeting or lecture, — perhaps it was Mrs. Smith's, — the latter was saying that she did not want to go, she did not think it was worth while to be running after such amusements, etc., etc. Whereupon Miss Hosmer asked, "What do you go for, then?" "None of your business," was the characteristic reply. Sometimes, when a woman was speaking where gentlemen were present, she put her hand on her and said, "Be still. I want to hear the men talk."

I still remember those wonderful sparkles at Pelham Pond. The very sportsmen in the distance, with their guns and dogs, presented some surfaces on which a sparkle could impinge, such was the transparent, flashing air. It was a most exhilarating, intoxicating air, as when poets sing of the sparkling wine.

I have seen some men in whom the usually posthumous decay appeared to have commenced. They impressed me as actually nothing alive; as if there was not salt enough in their composition to preserve them. I could not approach them without a smelling-bottle

at my nose, — not till the Fates strengthened the pickle in which they were.

While the snow is falling, the telegraph harp is resounding across the fields. As if the telegraph approached so near an attribute of divinity that music naturally attended it.

To-day, again, I saw some of the *blue* in the crevices of the snow. It is snowing, but not a moist snow. Perhaps the snow in the air, as well as on the ground, takes up the white rays and reflects the blue. There is no blue to be seen overhead, and it has as it were taken refuge in the chinks and crevices in the snow.

What is like the peep or whistle of a bird in the midst of a winter storm?

The pines, some of them, seen through this fine driving snow, have a bluish hue.

Barbarous as we esteem the Chinese, they have already built their steamboat. Swiftly the arts spread in these days. Madame Pfeiffer visited the garden of a mandarin in Canton, "in which," says she, "I was the more interested because it was the birthplace of the first Chinese steamboat, built by order of the mandarin and by Chinese workmen. The mandarin had gone through his studies in North America, where he remained for thirteen years." She was there after 1846.

Jan. 19. I felt a little wonder the other night that the large man went so as a matter of course with the human race, that he did not suspect that he belonged to some other genus, that he did not go off with some menagerie, with the elephant or the camelopard. You

do not have to go far, to grow much, to get beyond the sphere of humanity. Why he should exist as a sort of attaché to the human race. Where was the rest of his family? He was, as it were, astray. There is something comically pathetic about it. What made him think that he belonged to the human race? Did he gradually grow up to that faith? His was a vegetable growth. His face lacked expression. When his large features were done, his face still bulged out and grew this way and that, just like a mammoth squash which magnifies all its warts. Great growth of body suggests the vegetable. He was pumpkin pine, sycamore. The extra growth was squash and pumpkin all. It was more flesh than his soul could animate. There is something monstrous even about his thoughts.

The snow, which has drifted badly, ceasing about 2 o'clock, I went forth by way of Walden road, whither no sleigh or sled had passed this day, the fine, dry snow blowing and drifting still. It was pleasant to make the first tracks in this road through the woods, where all the road, except a faint depression, two long slight valleys, marking the ruts, was obliterated, — a smooth, white plain between the bordering woods, which only a few dry oak leaves coursed over. I sank into the snow for long distances more than three feet at each step. From Bare Hill I looked into the west, the sun still fifteen minutes high. The snow blowing far off in the sun, high as a house, looked like the mist that rises from rivers in the morning. I came across lots through the dry white powder from Britton's camp. Very cold on the causeway and on the hilltops. The

low western sky an Indian red, after the sun was gone.

Jan. 20. Walked down the Boston road. It was good to look off over the great unspotted fields of snow, the walls and fences almost buried in it and hardly a turf or stake left bare for the starving crows to light on. There is no track nor mark to mar its purity beyond the single sled track, except where, once in half a mile, some traveller has stepped aside for a sleigh to pass.

The farmers nowadays can cart out peat and muck over the frozen meadows. Somewhat analogous, methinks, the scholar does; drives in with tight-braced energy and winter cheer on to his now firm meadowy grounds, and carts, hauls off, the virgin loads of fertilizing soil which he threw up in the warm, soft summer. We now bring our muck out of the meadows, but it was thrown up first in summer. The scholar's and the farmer's work are strictly analogous. Easily he now conveys, sliding over the snow-clad ground, great loads of fuel and of lumber which have grown in many summers, from the forest to the town. *He* deals with the dry hay and cows, the spoils of summer meads and fields, stored in his barns, doling it out from day to day, and manufactures milk for men. When I see the farmer driving into his barn-yard with a load of muck, whose blackness contrasts strangely with the white snow, I have the thoughts which I have described. He is doing like myself. My barn-yard is my journal.

I do not know but it is too much to read one newspaper in a week, for I now take the weekly *Tribune*, and for a few days past, it seems to me, I have not dwelt in Concord; the sun, the clouds, the snow, the trees say not so much to me. You cannot serve two masters. It requires more than a day's devotion to know and to possess the wealth of a day.[1] To read of things distant and sounding betrays us into slighting these which are then apparently near and small. We learn to look abroad for our mind and spirit's daily nutriment, and what is this dull town to me? what are these plain fields and the aspects of this earth and these skies? All summer and far into the fall I unconsciously went by the newspapers and the news, and now I find it was because the morning and the evening were full of news to me. My walks were full of incidents. I attended not to the affairs of Europe, but to my own affairs in Concord fields.[2]

To see the sun rise or go down every day would preserve us sane forever, — so to relate ourselves, for our mind's and body's health, to a universal fact.[3]

Last spring our new stone bridge was said to be about to fall. The selectmen got a bridge architect to look at it and, acting on his advice, put up a barrier and warned travellers not to cross it. Of course, I believed with the rest of my neighbors that there was no *immediate* danger, for there it was standing, and the barrier knocked down, that travellers might go over,

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 471; *Misc.*, Riv. 247.]
[2] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 472; *Misc.*, Riv. 275.]
[3] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 472, 473; *Misc.*, Riv. 275.]

as they did with few exceptions. But one day, riding that way with another man, and reflecting that I had never looked into the condition of the bridge myself, and if it should fall with us on it, I should have reason to say what a fool I was to go over when I was warned, I made him stop on this side, merely for principle's sake, and walked over while he rode before, and I got in again at the other end. I paid that degree of respect to the advice of the bridge architect and the warning of the selectmen. It was my companion's daily thoroughfare.

Greeley says of London, "The morning to sleep, the afternoon to business, and the evening to enjoyment, seems the usual routine with the favored classes." They have no morning life then. They are afternoon men. To begin the day at noon!

The days are now sensibly longer, and half past five is as light as five was.

Jan. 21. One day, when I went out to my wood-pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger and black, fiercely contending with one another, and rolling over on the chips. It was evidently a struggle for life and death which had grown out of a serious feud. Having once got hold, they never let go of each other, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips, each retaining his hold with mastiff-like pertinacity. Looking further, I found to my astonishment that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum* but a *bellum*, a war between two races of ants, the red

always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black.[1] They covered all the hills and vales of my wood-yard, and, indeed, the ground was already strewn with the dead, both red and black. It was the only war I had ever witnessed, the only battle-field I ever trod while the battle was raging; internecine war; the red republicans and the black despots or imperialists. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat, yet without any noise that I could hear, and never human soldiers fought so resolutely. I watched a couple, in a little sunny valley amid the chips, that were fast locked in each other's embraces, now at noonday prepared to fight till the sun went down. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vise to his adversary's front, and through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board, while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side, and, as I saw on looking nearer, had divested him of several of his members. None manifested a disposition to retreat from the combat equal or unequal. It was evident that their battle-cry was conquer or die. They fought like mastiffs or bulldogs, who will not let go though all their legs are cut off. In the meanwhile there came along a single red ant on the side-hill of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had dispatched his foe or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs. He

[1] [The story of this battle is told in *Walden*, pp. 253–256; Riv. 355–360.]

saw this unequal combat from afar, — for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the red, — he drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants, then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior and commenced his operations near the root of his right fore leg, leaving the other to select among his own members, and so there were three united for life and death apparently, — united for life until death, — as if a new kind of attraction had been invented, which put all other locks and cements to shame.

I should not wonder if they had their respective musical bands stationed on some chip and playing their national airs the while to cheer the dying combatants. (Whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it.) I was myself excited somewhat, even as if they had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference. And certainly there is no other fight recorded in Concord that will bear a moment's comparison with this. I have no doubt they had as just a cause, one or even both parties, as our forefathers, and that the results will be as important and memorable. And there was far more patriotism and heroism. For numbers and for carnage it was an Austerlitz or Dresden. I saw no disposition to retreat.

I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window-sill, wishing [to] see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that though he

was assiduously gnawing at the near fore leg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler, his own breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose own breastplate was apparently too thick for him; and the dark carbuncles of his eyes shone with ferocity such as wars only could excite. They struggled for half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again, the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the former were hanging on either side of him still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring, with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only one or two legs, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he had accomplished. I raised the tumbler, and he went off over the window-sill in that crippled state. Whether he finally survived that combat and had a pension settled on him, I do not know. But I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter.

Which party was victorious I never learned, nor the cause of the war. But I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings harrowed and excited by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door.

To record truths which shall have the same relation and value to the next world, *i. e.* the world of thought and of the soul, that political news has to this.

This winter they are cutting down our woods more seriously than ever, — Fair Haven Hill, Walden, Lin-

næa Borealis Wood, etc., etc. Thank God, they cannot cut down the clouds!

History used to be the history of successive kings or their reigns, — the Williams, Henrys, Johns, Richards, etc., etc., all of them great in somebody's estimation. But we have altered that considerably. Hereafter it is to be to a greater extent the history of peoples. You do not hear some King Louis or Edward or Leopold referred to now by sensible men with much respect.

Heard Higginson lecture to-night on Mohammed. Why did I not like it better? Can I deny that it was good? Perhaps I am bound to account to *myself* at least for any lurking dislike for what others admire and I am not *prepared* to find fault with. Well, I did not like it, then, because it did not make me like it, it did not carry me away captive. He is not simple enough. For the most part the manner overbore, choked off, and stifled, put out of sight and hearing, the matter. I was inclined to forget that he was speaking, conveying ideas; thought there had been an intermission. Never endeavor consciously to supply the tone which you think proper for certain sentences. It is as if a man whose mind was at ease should supply the tones and gestures for a man in distress who found only the words; as when one makes a speech and another behind him makes gestures. Then he reminded me of Emerson, and I could not afford to be reminded of Christ himself. Yet who can deny that it was good? But it was that intelligence, that way of viewing things (combined with much peculiar *talent*), which is the

common property of this generation. A man does best when he is most himself.

I never realized so distinctly as this moment that I am peacefully parting company with the best friend I ever had, by each pursuing his proper path. I perceive that it is possible that we may have a better *understanding* now than when we were more at one. Not expecting such essential agreement as before. Simply our paths diverge.

Jan. 22. Having occasion to get up and light a lamp in the middle of a sultry night, — perhaps it was to exterminate the mosquito race, — I observed a stream of large black ants passing up and down one of the bare corner posts, those descending having their large white larvæ in their mouths, the others making haste up for another load. I supposed that they had found the heat so great just under the roof as to compel them to remove their offspring to a cooler place by night. They had evidently taken and communicated the resolution to improve the coolness of the night to remove their young to a cooler and safer locality. One stream running up, another down, with great industry.

But why I changed? why I left the woods? I do not think that I can tell. I have often wished myself back. I do not know any better how I ever came to go there. Perhaps it is none of my business, even if it is yours. Perhaps I wanted a change. There was a little stagnation, it may be. About 2 o'clock in the afternoon the world's axle creaked as if it needed greasing, as if the oxen labored with the wain and could hardly get their

load over the ridge of the day. Perhaps if I lived there much longer, I might live there forever. One would think twice before he accepted heaven on such terms. A ticket to Heaven must include tickets to Limbo, Purgatory, and Hell. Your ticket to the boxes admits you to the pit also. And if you take a cabin passage, you can smoke, at least forward of the engine, — you have the liberty of the whole boat. But no, I do not wish for a ticket to the boxes, nor to take a cabin passage. I will rather go before the mast and on the deck of the world. I have no desire to go "abaft the engine."[1]

What is it that I see from one mile to two miles distant in the horizon on all sides from my window, but the woods, which still, almost without exception, encircle our New England towns. They still bound almost every view. They have been driven off only so far. Where still wild creatures haunt. How long will these last? Is this a universal and permanent feature? Have the oldest countries retained it? Is it not an interesting and important question whether these are decreasing or not? Look out what window I will, my eyes rest in the distance on a forest! Is this fact of no significance? Is this circumstance of no value? Why such pains in old countries to plant gardens and parks? A certain sample of wild nature, a certain primitiveness.

One man proposed a book in which visitors should write their names; said he would be at the expense of it!!! Did he consider what the expense of it would be? As if it were of any use, when a man failed to make any memorable impression on you, for him to leave his name.

[1] [*Walden*, p. 356; Riv. 498.]

But it may be that he writes a good hand, who had not left any fame. No! I kept a book to put their fames in. I was at the expense of it.[1]

The milkman is now filling his ice-house.

The towns thus bordered, with a fringed and tasselled border, each has its preserves. Methinks the town should have more supervision and control over its parks than it has. It concerns us all whether these proprietors choose to cut down all the woods this winter or not.

I must say that I do not know what made me leave the pond. I left it as unaccountably as I went to it. To speak sincerely, I went there because I had got ready to go; I left it for the same reason.

How much botany is indebted to the Arabians! A great part of our common names of plants would appear to be Arabic.

Was it not fit that I should live on rice mainly, who loved so well to read the philosophy of India?[2]

The pleasures of the intellect are permanent, the pleasures of the heart are transitory.

My friend invites me to read my papers to him. Gladly would I read, if he would hear. He must not hear coarsely but finely, suffering not the *least* to pass through the sieve of hearing. To associate with one for years with joy who never met you thought with thought! An overflowing sympathy while yet there is no intellectual communion. Could we not meet on higher ground with the same heartiness? It is dull work reading to one who does not apprehend you.

[1] [*Walden*, p. 169; Riv. 237, 238.] [2] [*Walden*, p. 67; Riv. 97.]

How can it go on? I will still abide by the truth in my converse and intercourse with my friends, whether I am so brought nearer to or removed further from them. I shall not be the less your friend for answering you truly though coldly. Even the estrangement of friends is a fact to be serenely contemplated, as in the course of nature. It is of no use to lie either by word or action. Is not the everlasting truth agreeable to you?

To set down such choice experiences that my own writings may inspire me and at last I may make wholes of parts. Certainly it is a distinct profession to rescue from oblivion and to fix the sentiments and thoughts which visit all men more or less generally, that the contemplation of the unfinished picture may suggest its harmonious completion. Associate reverently and as much as you can with your loftiest thoughts. Each thought that is welcomed and recorded is a nest egg, by the side of which more will be laid. Thoughts accidentally thrown together become a frame in which more may be developed and exhibited. Perhaps this is the main value of a habit of writing, of keeping a journal, — that so we remember our best hours and stimulate ourselves. My thoughts are my company. They have a certain individuality and separate existence, aye, personality. Having by chance recorded a few disconnected thoughts and then brought them into juxtaposition, they suggest a whole new field in which it was possible to labor and to think. Thought begat thought.

One mother-o'-pearl tint is common to the winter sky half an hour before sundown.

I love to look at Ebby Hubbard's oaks and pines on the hillside from Brister's Hill. Am thankful that there is one old miser who will not sell nor cut his woods, though it is said that they are wasting. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

It is a sharp, cutting cold day, stiffening the face. Thermometers have lately sunk to 20°.

When a man asks me a question, I look him in the face. If I do not see any inquiry there, I cannot answer it. A man asked me about the coldness of this winter compared with others last night. I looked at him. His face expressed no more curiosity or relationship to me than a custard pudding. I made him a random answer. I put him off till he was in earnest. He wanted to make conversation.

The surface of the snow in the fields is that of pretty large waves on a sea over which a summer breeze is sweeping.

That in the preaching or mission of the Jesuits in Canada which converted the Indians was their sincerity. They could not be suspected of sinister motives. The savages were not poor observers and reasoners. The priests were, therefore, sure of success, for they had paid the price of it.

We resist no true invitations; they are irresistible. When my friend asks me to stay, and I do not, unless I have another engagement it is because I do not find myself invited. It is not in his will to invite me. We should deal with the real mood of our friends. I visited my friend constantly for many years, and he postponed our friendship to trivial engagements, so that I saw him

not at all. When in after years he had leisure to meet me, I did not find myself invited to go to him.

Jan. 23. The snow is so deep and the cold so intense that the crows are compelled to be very bold in seeking their food, and come very near the houses in the village. One is now walking about and pecking the dung in the street in front of Frank Monroe's. They remind me, as they sail along over the street, of the turkey buzzards of the South, and perhaps many hard winters in succession would make them as tame.

There is a vegetable life, as well as a spiritual and animal life, in us, for the hair and nails continue to grow after the *anima* has left the body, and the spiritual and animal life is dead. There is also probably an inorganic mineral life.

The surface of the snow on the 20th was not yet disturbed, or rippled even, by the wind.

P. M. — Deep Cut, going to Fair Haven Hill.

No music from the telegraph harp on the causeway, where the wind is strong, but in the Cut this cold day I hear memorable strains. What must the birds and beasts think where it passes through woods, who heard only the squeaking of the trees before! I should think that these strains would get into their music at last. Will not the mockingbird be heard one day inserting this strain in his medley? It intoxicates me. Orpheus is still alive. All poetry and mythology revive. The spirits of all bards sweep the strings. I hear the clearest silver, lyre-like tones, Tyrtæan tones. I think of Menander and the rest. It is the most glorious music I ever heard.

All those bards revive and flourish again in that five minutes in the Deep Cut. The breeze came through an oak still wearing its dry leaves. The very fine clear tones seemed to come from the very core and pith of the telegraph-pole. I know not but it is my own chords that tremble so divinely. There are barytones and high sharp tones, etc. Some come sweeping seemingly from further along the wire. The latent music of the earth had found here a vent. Music Æolian. There were two strings, in fact, one each side. I do not know but this will make me read the Greek poets. Thus, as ever, the finest uses of things are the accidental. Mr. Morse did not invent this music.

I see where the squirrels have torn the pine cones in pieces to come at their seeds. And in some cases the mice (?) have nibbled the buds of the pitch pines, where the plumes have been bent down by the snow.

The Blue Hills of Milton are now white.

Lindley, in Loudon, dismisses the winterberries by saying, "The species are low shrubs of little beauty." Says nothing of the berry.

There are some whose ears help me so that my things have a rare significance when I read to them. It is almost too good a hearing, so that for the time I regard my own writing from too favorable a point of view.

Just before sunset there were few clouds or specks to be seen in the western sky, but the sun gets down lower, and many dark clouds are made visible, their sides toward us being darkened. In the bright light they were but floating feathers of vapor; now they swell into dark evening clouds.

It is a fair sunset, with many purplish fishes in the horizon, pinkish and golden with bright edges; like a school of purplish whales, they sail or float down from the north; or like leopards' skins they hang in the west. If the sun goes behind a cloud, it is still reflected from the least haziness or vapor in that part of the sky, the air is so clear; and the afterglow is remarkably long. And now the blaze is put out, and only a few glowing clouds, like the flickering light of the fire, skirt the west. And now only the brands and embers, mixed with smoke, make an Indian red along the horizon. And the new moon and the evening star, close together, preside over the twilight scene.

The thermometer was at 21° this morning.

Some botanical names have originated in a mere blunder. Thus the *Citharexylum melanocardium* of the West Indies, "called by the French *fidèle*, from its faithfulness or durability in building," the English have corrupted into fiddle-wood, and so the genus goes. It is unfit for musical instruments. (Lindley.)

Jan. 24. If thou art a writer, write as if thy time were short, for it is indeed short at the longest. Improve each occasion when thy soul is reached. Drain the cup of inspiration to its last dregs. Fear no intemperance in that, for the years will come when otherwise thou wilt regret opportunities unimproved. The spring will not last forever. These fertile and expanding seasons of thy life, when the rain reaches thy root, when thy vigor shoots, when thy flower is budding, shall be fewer and farther between. Again I say,

Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Use and commit to life what you cannot commit to memory. I hear the tones of my sister's piano below. It reminds me of strains which once I heard more frequently, when, possessed with the inaudible rhythm, I sought my chamber in the cold and communed with my own thoughts. I feel as if I then received the gifts of the gods with too much indifference. Why did I not cultivate those fields they introduced me to? Does nothing withstand the inevitable march of time? Why did I not use my eyes when I stood on Pisgah? Now I hear those strains but seldom. My rhythmical mood does not endure. I cannot draw from it and return to it in my thought as to a well all the evening or the morning. I cannot dip my pen in it. I cannot work the vein, it is so fine and volatile. Ah, sweet, ineffable reminiscences!

In thy journal let there never be a jest! To the earnest there is nothing ludicrous.

P. M. — Down the Flint's Pond road and return across.

Where the mountains in the horizon are well wooded and the snow does not lodge, they still look blue. All but a narrow segment of the sky in the northwest and southeast being suddenly overcast by a passing kind of snow-squall, though no snow falls, I look into the clear sky with its floating clouds in the northwest as from night into day, now at 4 P. M. The sun sets about five.

Walden and White Ponds are a vitreous greenish

blue, like patches of the winter sky seen in the west before sundown.[1]

Even the dry leaves are gregarious, and they collect in little heaps in the hollows in the snow, or even on the plane surfaces, driven in flocks by the wind. How like shrinking maidens wrapping their scarfs about them they flutter along! The oaks are made thus to retain their leaves, that they may play over the snow-crust and add variety to the winter landscape. If you wished to collect leaves, you would only have to make holes in the snow for traps. I see that my tracks are often filled two feet deep with them. They are blown quite across Walden on the wavy snow. Two flitting along together by fits and starts, now one running ahead, then another, remind me of squirrels. Mostly white oak leaves, but the other oaks, *i. e.* especially red oaks, also. There is a certain refinement or cultivation, even femininess, suggested by the rounded lobes, the scalloped edge, of the white oak leaf, compared with the wild, brusque points of the red and black and scarlet and shrub oaks.

Now I see a faint bluish tinge in the ruts, but it is warmer and there is a snow-bearing cloud over all.

When the cars passed, I being on the pond (Walden), the sun was setting and suffusing the clouds far and near with rosy light. Even the steam from the engine, as its flocks or wreaths rose above the shadow of the woods, became a rosy cloud even fairer than the rest, but it was soon dissipated.

I see in the woods the woodman's embers, which

[1] [*Walden*, p. 197; Riv. 277, 278.]

have melted a circular hole in the snow, where he warms his coffee at noon. But these days the fire does not melt the snow over a space three feet across.

These woods! Why do I not feel their being cut more sorely? Does it not affect me nearly? The axe can deprive me of much. Concord is sheared of its pride. I am certainly the less attached to my native town in consequence. One, and a main, link is broken. I shall go to Walden less frequently.

When the telegraph harp trembles and wavers, I am most affected, as if it were approaching to articulation. It sports so with my heart-strings. When the harp dies away a little, then I revive for it. It cannot be too faint. I almost envy the Irish, whose shanty in the Cut is so near, that they can hear this music daily standing at their door. How strange to think that a sound so soothing, elevating, educating, telling of Greece and the Muses, might have been heard sweeping other strings when only the red man ranged these fields! might, perchance, in course of time have civilized him!

If an Indian brave will not fear torture and aids his enemies to torment him, what become of pity and a hundred other Christian virtues? The charitable are suddenly without employment.

When I come out on to the causeway, I behold a splendid picture in the west. The damask-lined clouds, like rifts from a coal mine, which sparkle beneath, seen diving into the west. When clouds rise in mid-afternoon, you cannot foresee what sunset picture they are preparing for us. A single elm by Hayden's is re-

lieved against the amber and golden border, deepening into dusky but soon to be red, in the horizon.

And now the crescent of the moon is seen, and her attendant star is farther off than last night.

Jan. 25. Sunday. The snow has been for some time more than a foot deep on a level, and some roads drifted quite full; and the cold for some weeks has been intense, as low as twenty and twenty-one degrees in the early morning. A Canadian winter. Some say that we have not had so long a spell of cold weather since '31, when they say it was not seen to thaw for six weeks. But last night and to-day the weather has moderated. It is glorious to be abroad this afternoon. The snow melts on the surface. The warmth of the sun reminds me of summer. The dog runs before us on the railroad causeway and appears to enjoy it as much as ourselves. C. remarks truly that most people do not distinguish between a pup and a dog, and treat both alike, though the former may not yet have a tooth in his head.

When Sophia told R. Rice that Dr. B. said that Foster was an infidel and was injuring the young men, etc., "Did he?" he observed. "Well, he is a great man. He swims in pretty deep water, but it is n't very extensive." When she added, "Mr. Frost says that Garrison had to apologize for printing Foster's sermon," he said, "Did he? Well, they may set as many back fires as they please; they won't be of any use; they'll soon go out." She said the selectmen were going to ask seven dollars instead of five for the hall. But he

said that he would build them a hall, if they would engage to give him five dollars steadily. To be sure, it would not be quite so handsome as the present, but it should have the same kind of seats.

The clay in the Deep Cut is melting and streaming down, glistening in the sun. It is I that melts, while the harp sounds on high, and the snow-drifts on the west side look like clouds.

We turned down the brook at Heywood's meadow. It was worth the while to see how the water, even in the marsh where the brook is almost stagnant, sparkled in this atmosphere, for though warm it is remarkably clear. Water which in summer would look dark and perhaps turbid now sparkles like the lakes in November. This water is the more attractive, since all around is deep snow. The brook here is full of cat-tails (*Typha latifolia*, reed-mace). I found, on pulling open or breaking in my hand, as one would break bread, the still nearly perfect spikes of this fine reed, that the flowers were red or crimson at their base, where united to the stem. When I rubbed off thus what was at first but a thimbleful of these dry flowerets, they suddenly took in air and flushed up like powder, expanding like feathers and foam, filling and overflowing my hand, to which they imparted a sensation of warmth quite remarkable. I was astonished to see how a small quantity was expanded and inflated on being released and given to the air, and I could not be tired with repeating the experiment. I think a single one would more than fill a half-peck measure if they lay as light as at first in the air. It is something magical to one

who tries it for the first time. Like a puff of powder it flashes up. You do not know at first where they all come from. It is the conjurer's trick in nature, equal to taking feathers enough to fill a bed out of a hat. When you had done, but still will scrape the almost bare stem, still they overflow your hand as before. See it again, and try the combustibility of the pollen. As the flowerets are opening and liberating themselves, showing their red extremities, it has the effect of a changeable color.

Ah, then, the brook beyond, its rippling waters and its sunny sands! They made me forget that it was winter. Where springs oozed out of the soft bank over the dead leaves and the green sphagnum, they had melted the snow, or the snow had melted as it fell perchance, and the rabbits had sprinkled the mud about on the snow. The sun reflected from the sandy, gravelly bottom sometimes a bright sunny streak no bigger than your finger, reflected from a ripple as from a prism, and the sunlight, reflected from a hundred points of the surface of the rippling brook, enabled me to realize summer. But the dog partly spoiled the transparency of the water by running in the brook. A pup that had never seen a summer brook.

I am struck and attracted by the parallelism of the twigs of the hornbeam, *fine* parallelism.

Having gone a quarter of a mile beyond the bridge, where C. calls this his Spanish Brook, I looked back from the top of the hill on the south into this deep dell. Where the white pines stood thick, rising one above another, reflecting the sunlight, so soft and warm by

contrast with the snow, as never in summer, — for the idea of warmth prevailed over the cold which the snow suggested, though I saw through and between them to a distant snow-clad hill, and also to oaks red with their dry leaves, — and maple limbs were mingled with the pines, I was on the verge of seeing something, but I did not. If I had been alone and had had more leisure, I might have seen something to report.

Now we are on Fair Haven, still but a snow plain. Far down the river the shadows on Conantum are bluish, somewhat like the holes in the snow, perchance. The sun is half an hour high, perhaps. Standing near the outlet of the pond, I look up and down the river with delight, it is so warm and the air is, notwithstanding, so clear. When I invert my head and look at the woods half a mile down the stream, they suddenly sink lower in the horizon and are removed full two miles off; yet the air is so clear that I seem to see every stem and twig with beautiful distinctness. The fine tops of the trees are so relieved against the sky that I never cease to admire the minute subdivisions. It is the same when I look up the stream. A bare hickory under Lee's Cliff, seen against the sky, becomes an interesting, even beautiful, object to behold. I think where have I been staying all these days. I will surely come here again.

When I first paddled a boat on Walden, it was completely surrounded by thick and lofty pine and oak woods, and in some of its coves grape-vines had run over the trees and formed bowers under which a boat could pass. The hills which form its shores are so steep, and the woods on them were then so high, that, as you

looked down the pond from west to east, it looked like an amphitheatre for some kind of sylvan spectacle. I have spent many an hour, when I was younger, floating over its surface as the zephyr willed, having paddled to the middle, lying on my back across the seats of my boat, in a summer forenoon, and looking into the sky above, dreaming awake, until I was aroused by my boat touching the sand, and I arose to see what shore my fates had impelled me to; when idleness was the most attractive and productive industry. Many a forenoon have I stolen away thus, preferring thus to spend the most valued part of the day. For I was rich, if not in money, in sunny hours and summer days, and spent them lavishly. Nor do I regret that I did not spend more of them behind a counter or in the workshop or the teacher's desk, in which last two places I have spent so many of them.[1]

Jan. 26. Men have ever associated the verdure of evergreen trees — hemlocks, firs, spruces, etc. — with the moisture and coolness of mountains. Our word pine is from the Celtic "*pin* or *pen*, a rock or mountain," from which is derived the name of this genus in many languages. Hence the name "Apennines" (*Alpes pennines*). "*Pinaster* is Pliny's name for the wild pine." (All this from Lindley in Loudon.) But *Pinus* does not include hemlock or larch or fir.

Foster's success is in reaching such men as Houghton, Goodwin, Rice, McKean, Pratt, E. Hubbard, S. Barrett, and others, — Wilson, and even Dillingham;

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 212, 213; Riv. 300, 301.]

some of whom are men of sterling worth and probity, the salt of the earth, and confessedly the very best of our citizens, though the Church may have called them infidels. They were only more faithful than the rest. They did not go off at half-cock. I do not know more honest or trustworthy men than Rice, Pratt, Barrett, McKean, etc. Frost and Anger [?] might preach forever; they would never reach these men. Houghton never realized before that the design of any preacher was to do good to men. In this movement of the waters, the sectarians and formalists are left floating on chips and slivers of doctrine. In preaching to the men whom I have named they make the mistake of preaching or writing on the letter and not the meaning of the letter, the creed and not the life. When a truer man comes, the assembly see the difference at last between his life and the life of his predecessors, and the doctrines of the latter properly pass for *wind*. They say of the former, "He hits the nail on the head." Every shade and degree of hypocrisy will affect the tone of the voice, and the audience will laugh. The rumseller likes Foster better than Manning, though he is strenuously opposed to his traffic, because he is frank and manly with him and not all things to all men. Those men I have named represent the healthy mind of the generation, who have ears to hear. The man may be proud who satisfies them.

A tree seen against other trees is a mere dark mass, but against the sky it has parts, has symmetry and expression.

Whatever wit has been produced on the spur of the moment will bear to be reconsidered and reformed with

phlegm. The arrow had best not be loosely shot. The most transient and passing remark must be reconsidered by the writer, made sure and warranted, as if the earth had rested on its axle to back it, and all the natural forces lay behind it. The writer must direct his sentences as carefully and leisurely as the marksman his rifle, who shoots sitting and with a rest, with patent sights and conical balls beside. He must not merely seem to speak the truth. He must really speak it. If you foresee that a part of your essay will topple down after the lapse of time, throw it down now yourself.[1]

The thousand fine points and tops of the trees delight me; they are the plumes and standards and bayonets of a host that march to victory over the earth. The trees are handsome towards the heavens as well as up their boles; they are good for other things than boards and shingles.

Obey the spur of the moment. These accumulated it is that make the impulse and the impetus of the life of genius. These are the spongioles or rootlets by which its trunk is fed. If you neglect the moments, if you cut off your fibrous roots, what but a languishing life is to be expected? Let the spurs of countless moments goad us incessantly into life. I feel the spur of the moment thrust deep into my side. The present is an inexorable rider. The moment always spurs either with a sharp or a blunt spur. Are my sides calloused? Let us trust the rider, that he knows the way, that he knows when speed and effort are required. What other impulse do we wait for? Let us preserve religiously, secure, pro-

[1] [Channing, p. 248.]

tect the coincidence of our life with the life of nature. Else what are heat and cold, day and night, sun, moon, and stars to us? Was it not from sympathy with the present life of nature that we were born at this epoch rather than at another?

The truest account of heaven is the fairest, and I will accept none which disappoints expectation. It is more glorious to expect a better, than to enjoy a worse.

My life as essentially belongs to the present as that of a willow tree in the spring. Now, now, its catkins expand, its yellow bark shines, its sap flows; now or never must you make whistles of it. Get the day to back you; let it back you and the night.

When the thermometer is down to 20°, the streams of thought tinkle underneath like the rivers under the ice. Thought like the ocean is nearly of one temperature. Ideas, — are they the fishes of thought?

Poetry *implies* the whole truth. Philosophy *expresses* a particle of it.

Would you see your mind, look at the sky. Would you know your own moods, be weather-wise. He whom the weather disappoints, disappoints himself.

Let all things give way to the impulse of expression. It is the bud unfolding, the perennial spring. As well stay the spring. Who shall resist the thaw?

What if all the ponds were shallow? Would it not react on the minds of men? If there were no physical deeps. I thank God that he made this pond deep and pure for a symbol.[1]

The word is well naturalized or rooted that can be

[1] [*Walden*, p. 316; Riv. 442.]

traced back to a Celtic original. It is like getting out stumps and fat pine roots.

While men believe in the infinite some ponds will be thought bottomless.[1]

In winter we will think brave and hardy and most native thoughts. Then the tender summer birds are flown.

In few countries do they enjoy so fine a contrast of summer and winter. We really have four seasons, each incredible to the other. Winter cannot be mistaken for summer here. Though I see the boat turned up on the shore and half buried under snow, as I walk over the invisible river, summer is far away, with its rustling reeds. It only suggests the want of thrift, the carelessness, of its owner.

Nature never indulges in exclamations, never says Ah! or Alas! She is not of French descent. She is a plain writer, uses few gestures, does not add to her verbs, uses few adverbs, uses no expletives. I find that I use many words for the sake of emphasis which really add nothing to the force of my sentences, and they look relieved the moment I have cancelled these. Words by which I express my mood, my conviction, rather than the simple truth.

Yesterday, though warm, it was clear enough for water and windows to sparkle.

Youth supplies us with colors, age with canvas. How rare it must be that in age our life receives a new coloring! The heavens were blue when I was young, and that is their color still. Paint is costly. Nevertheless,

[1] [*Walden*, p. 316; Riv. 442.]

let thy report be colorless as it respects the hue of the reporter's mind; only let it have the colors of the thing reported. I think the heavens have had but one coat of paint since I was a boy, and their blue is paled and dingy and worn off in many places. I cannot afford to give them another coat. Where is the man so rich that he can give the earth a second coat of green in his manhood, or the heavens a second coat of blue? Our paints are all mixed when we are young. Methinks the skies need a new coat. Have our eyes any blue to spare? To see some men's heavens you would not suspect they had ever been azure or celestial, but that their painter had cheated them, had taken up a handful of the dirt at their feet and painted them that color, more in harmony with their lives. At least the color must have come out in a shower, in which they had the "blues."

I hear of one good thing Foster said in his sermon the other day, the subject being Nature: "Thank God, there is no doctrine of election with regard to Nature! We are all admitted to her."

To-day I see a few snow-fleas on the Walden road and a slight blueness in the chinks, it being cloudy and melting.

It is good to break and smell the black birch twigs now. The lichens look rather bright to-day, near the town line, in Heywood's wood by the pond. When they are bright and expanded, is it not a sign of a thaw or of rain? The beauty of lichens, with their scalloped leaves, the small attractive fields, the crinkled edge! I could study a single piece of bark for hours. How they flourish! I sympathize with their growth.

The woodpeckers work in Emerson's wood on the Cliff-top, the trees being partly killed by the top, and the grubs having hatched under the bark. The woodpeckers have stripped a whole side of some trees, and in a sound red oak they have dug out a mortise-hole with squarish shoulders, as if with a chisel. I have often seen these holes.

From these cliffs at this moment, the clouds in the west have a singular brassy color, and they are arranged in an unusual manner. A new disposition of the clouds will make the most familiar country appear foreign, like Tartary or Arabia Felix.

About 2 o'clock P. M. these days, after a fair forenoon, there is wont to blow up from the northwest a squally cloud, spanning the heavens, but before it reaches the southeast horizon it has lifted above the northwest, and so it leaves the sky clear there for sunset, while it has sunk low and dark in the southeast.

The men on the freight-train, who go over the whole length of the road, bow to me as to an old acquaintance, they pass me so often, and I think they take me for an "employé;" and am I not? [1]

The flowing clay on the east side is still richer today. I know of nothing so purgative of winter fumes and indigestions.[2] And then there is heard the harp high overhead, a new Orpheus modulating, moulding the earth and making the sands to follow its strains. Who is not young again? What more wonderful than that a simple string or wire stretched between two posts, on which the breezes play, can so excite the race

[1] [*Walden*, p. 128; Riv. 181.] [2] [*Walden*, p. 340; Riv. 476.]

of man with its vibrations, producing sounds kindred with the song of bards and the most admirable works of art?

Thaw with his gentle persuasion is more powerful than Thor with his hammer. The one melts, the other but breaks in pieces.[1] In these fresh designs there is more than the freedom of Grecian art, more than acanthus leaves. It flows even over the snow.

The vibrations of that string will surely remind a man of all that is most glorious in his experience, will more than realize to him the stories of the Delphic Oracle, will take him captive, make him mad. The distant is brought near to him through hearing. He abides in the body still, his soul is not quite ravished away, but news from other spheres than he lives in reaches him. It is evident that his life does not pass on that level.

Jan. 27. The peculiarity of a work of genius is the absence of the speaker from his speech. He is but the medium. You behold a perfect work, but you do not behold the worker. I read its page, but it is as free from any man that can be remembered as an impassable desert.

I think that the one word which will explain the Shakespeare miracle is "unconsciousness." If he had known his own comparative eminence, he would not have failed to publish it incessantly, though Bacon did not. There probably has been no more conscious age than the present.

[1] [*Walden*, p. 341; Riv. 477.]

Mill road south of Ministerial Swamp, 3 P. M.

As I stand under the hill beyond J. Hosmer's and look over the plains westward toward Acton and see the farmhouses nearly half a mile apart, few and solitary, in these great fields between these stretching woods, out of the world, where the children have to go far to school; the still, stagnant, heart-eating, life-everlasting, and gone-to-seed country, so far from the post-office where the weekly paper comes, wherein the new-married wife cannot live for loneliness, and the young man has to depend upon his horse for society; see young J. Hosmer's house, whither he returns with his wife in despair after living in the city, — I standing in Tarbell's road, which he alone cannot break out, — the world in winter for most walkers reduced to a sled track winding far through the drifts, all springs sealed up and no digressions; where the old man thinks he may possibly afford to rust it out, not having long to live, but the young man pines to get nearer the post-office and the Lyceum, is restless and resolves to go to California, because the depot is a mile off (he hears the rattle of the cars at a distance and thinks the world is going by and leaving him); where rabbits and partridges multiply, and muskrats are more numerous than ever, and none of the farmer's sons are willing to be farmers, and the apple trees are decayed, and the cellar-holes are more numerous than the houses, and the rails are covered with lichens, and the old maids wish to sell out and move into the village, and have waited twenty years in vain for this purpose and never finished but one room in the house, never plas-

tered nor painted, inside or out, lands which the Indian was long since dispossessed [of], and now the farms are run out, and what were forests are grain-fields, what were grain-fields, pastures; dwellings which only those Arnolds of the wilderness, those *coureurs de bois*, the baker and the butcher visit, to which at least the latter penetrates for the annual calf, — and as he returns the cow lows after; — whither the villager never penetrates, but in huckleberry time, perchance, and if he does not, who does? — where some men's breaths smell of rum, having smuggled in a jugful to alleviate their misery and solitude; where the owls give a regular serenade; — I say, standing there and seeing these things, I cannot realize that this is that hopeful young America which is famous throughout the world for its activity and enterprise, and this is the most thickly settled and Yankee part of it. What must be the condition of the *old* world! The *sphagnum* must by this time have concealed it from the eye.

In new countries men are scattered broadcast; they do not wait for roads to place their houses on, but roads seek out the houses, and each man is a prince in his principality and depends on himself. Perchance when the virgin soil is exhausted, a reaction takes place, and men concentrate in villages again, become social and commercial, and leave the steady and moderate few to work the country's mines.

The snow has been slowly melting, without rain or mist, the last two or three days. It has settled very much, though the eaves have not been heard to run by me. In going across lots, I walk in the woods, where

the snow is not so deep, part having been caught in the trees and dissipated in the air, and a part melted by the warmth of the wood and the reflection.

The poison sumach, with its stems hanging down on every side, is a very agreeable object now, seen against the snow.

I do not know but thoughts written down thus in a journal might be printed in the same form with greater advantage than if the related ones were brought together into separate essays. They are now allied to life, and are seen by the reader not to be far-fetched. It is more simple, less artful. I feel that in the other case I should have no proper frame for my sketches. Mere facts and names and dates communicate more than we suspect. Whether the flower looks better in the nosegay than in the meadow where it grew and we had to wet our feet to get it! Is the scholastic air any advantage?

Jan. 28. Perhaps I can never find so good a setting for my thoughts as I shall thus have taken them out of. The crystal never sparkles more brightly than in the cavern. The world have always loved best the fable with the moral. The children could read the fable alone, the grown-up read both. The truth so told has the best advantages of the most abstract statement, for it is not the less universally applicable. Where else will you ever find the true cement for your thoughts? How will you ever rivet them together without leaving the marks of the file? Yet Plutarch did not so; Montaigne did not so. Men have written travels in this

form, but perhaps no man's daily life has been rich enough to be journalized.

Our life should be so active and progressive as to be a journey. Our meals should all be of journey-cake and hasty pudding. We should be more alert, see the sun rise, not keep fashionable hours, enter a house, our own house, as a khan, a caravansary. At noon I did not dine; I ate my journey-cake. I quenched my thirst at a spring or a brook. As I sat at the table, the hospitality was so perfect and the repast so sumptuous that I seemed to be breaking my fast upon a bank in the midst of an arduous journey, that the water seemed to be a living spring, the napkins grass, the conversation free as the winds; and the servants that waited on us were our simple desires.

Cut off from Pilpay and Æsop the moral alone at the bottom, would that content you?

There will be no more rambling through the aisles of the wood, with occasional vistas through which you see the pond.

In those days when how to get my living honestly, with freedom left for my proper pursuits, was a question which vexed me even more than it does now, I used to see a large box by the railroad, six feet long by three wide, in which the workmen locked up their tools at night; and it suggested to me that every man who was hard pushed might get him such a one for a dollar, and, having bored a few auger-holes in it, to admit the air at least, get into it when it rained and at night, and shut the lid and hook it, and so have free-

dom in his mind, and in his soul be free. This did not seem the worst alternative, nor by any means a despicable resource. You could sit up as late as you pleased; and, whenever you got up in the morning, you would not have any creditor dogging you for rent. I should not be in a bad box. Many a man is harassed to death to pay the rent of a larger and more luxurious box, who would not have frozen to death in such a box as this. I should not be in so bad a box as many a man is in now.[1]

If you mean by hard times, times, not when there is no bread, but when there is no cake, I have no sympathy with you.

Economy is a subject that admits of being treated with levity, but it is not a subject that can be so disposed of.[2]

"Why don't you put on your overalls?" "Why, these are overalls and underalls, being all I have got. These are over all I have got."

They showed me Johnny Riordan to-day, with one thickness of ragged cloth over his little shirt for all this cold weather, with shoes with large holes in the toes, into which the snow got, as he said, without an outer garment, to walk a mile to school every day over the bleakest of causeways, — the clothes with countless patches, which hailed from, claimed descent from, were originally identical with, pantaloons of mine, which set as if his mother had fitted them to a tea-kettle first. This little mass of humanity, this tender gobbet

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 31, 32; Riv. 47, 48.]

[2] [*Walden*, p. 32; Riv. 48.]

for the fates, cast into a cold world with a torn lichen leaf wrapped about him, — Oh, I should rather hear that America's first-born were all slain than that his little fingers and toes should feel cold while I am warm. Is man so cheap that he cannot be clothed but with a mat, a rag, that we should bestow on him our *cold* victuals? Are there any fellow-creatures to whom we abandon our rags, to whom we give our old clothes and shoes when they will not fend the weather from ourselves? Let the mature rich wear the rags and insufficient clothing; let the infant poor wear the purple and fine linen. I shudder when I think of the fate of innocency. Our charitable institutions are an insult to humanity. A charity which dispenses the crumbs that fall from its overloaded tables, which are left after its feasts! [1]

[1] [See *Journal*, vol. ii, pp. 117, 118; vol. iii, pp. 149, 150. Some loose sheets of manuscript inclosed between the leaves of one of the journals contain the following more complete sketch of the little Irish boy, made up, with some revision, from the original entries: —

"They showed me little Johnny Riordan the other day, as bright a boy of five years as ever trod our paths, whom you could not see for five minutes without loving and honoring him. He *lives* in what they call the *shanty* in the woods. He had on, in the middle of January of the coldest winter we have had for twenty years, one thickness only of ragged cloth sewed on to his pantaloons over his little shirt, and shoes with large holes in the toes, into which the snow got, as he was obliged to confess, he who had trodden five winters under his feet! Thus clad he walked a mile to school every day, over the bleakest of railroad causeways, where I know by experience the grown man would frequently freeze his ears or nose if they were not well protected, — for his parents have no thermometer, — all to get learning and warmth and there sit at the head of his bench. These clothes, with countless patches, which had for vehicle — O shame! shame! — pantaloons

3 P. M. — Went round by Tuttle's road, and so out on to the Walden road.

that had been mine, they whispered to me, set as if his mother had fitted them to a tea-kettle first.

"I glimpsed him the other morning taking his last step from his last snow-drift on to the schoolhouse door-step, floundering still; saw not his face nor his profile, only his mien, but saw clearly in imagination his 'old-worthy' face behind the sober visor of his cap, and he revived to my mind the grave nobility and magnanimity of ancient heroes. He never was drawn in a willow wagon, but progresses by his own brave steps. Has not the world waited for such a generation? Here he condescends to his a-b-c without one smile, who has the lore of worlds uncounted in his brain. He speaks not of the adventures of the causeway. What was the bravery of Leonidas and his three hundred boys at the pass of Thermopylæ to this infant's? They dared but to die; he dares to live, and takes his reward of merit, perchance, without relaxing his face into a smile, that does not reward a thousandth part of his merits, that overlooks his unseen and unrewardable merits, — Little Johnny Riordan, who faces cold and routs it like a Persian army, who, yet innocent, carries in his knees the strength of a thousand Indras. Not to be so tenderly nurtured as you and I forsooth? All day he plays with his coevals and equals, and then they go to their several homes.

"I am the little Irish boy,
That lives in the shanty.
I am five years old to-day,
And shall soon be one and twenty.

"At recess I play
With little Billy Gray,
And when school is done,
Then away I run.

"And if I meet the cars,
I get on the other track,
And then I know, whatever comes,
I need n't look back.

These warmer days the woodchopper finds that the wood cuts easier than when it had the frost in its sapwood, though it does not split so readily. Thus every change in the weather has its influence on him, and is appreciated by him in a peculiar way. The woodcutter and his practices and experiences are more to be attended to; his accidents, perhaps more than any other's, should mark the epochs in the winter day. Now that the Indian is gone, he stands nearest to nature. Who has written the history of his day? How far still is the writer of books from the man, his old playmate it may

"Having carried off the palm in the intellectual contest with the children of luxury, how bravely he contemplates his destiny: —

"I shall grow up
And be a great man,
And shovel all day
As hard as I can.

"This tender gobbet for the fates, cast into a cold world, with a torn lichen leaf wrapped about him! I would rather hear that America's first-born were all slain than that his little fingers and toes should feel cold while I am warm. Is man so cheap that he cannot be clothed but with a mat or a rag? that we should abandon to him our *worn-out* clothes or our *cold* victuals? Infancy pleads with equal eloquence from all platforms. Rather let the mature rich wear the rags and insufficient clothing, the infant poor and rich, if any, wear the costly furs, the purple and fine linen. Our charitable institutions are an insult to humanity, — a charity which dispenses the crumbs that fall from its overloaded tables! whose waste and whose example helped to produce that poverty!

"While the charitable waddle about cased in furs and finery, this boy, lively as a cricket, passes them on his way to school. I see that, for the present, the child is happy, is not puny, and has all the wonders of nature for his toys. Have I not faith that his tenderness will in some way be cherished and protected, as the buds of spring in the remotest wintry dell no less than in the garden and summer-house?"]

be, who chops in the woods! There are ages between them. Homer refers to the progress of the woodcutter's work, to mark the time of day on the plains of Troy, and the inference from such passages commonly is that he lived in a more primitive state of society than the present. But I think that this is a mistake. Like proves like in all ages, and the fact that I myself should take pleasure in referring to just such simple and peaceful labors which are always proceeding, that the contrast itself always attracts the civilized poet to what is rudest and most primitive in his contemporaries, all this rather proves a certain interval between the poet and the chopper whose labor he refers to, than an unusual nearness to him, on the principle that familiarity breeds contempt. Homer is to be subjected to a very different kind of criticism from any he has received.

That reader who most fully appreciates the poet, and derives the greatest pleasure from his works, himself lives in circumstances most like those of the poet himself.

About Brister's Spring the ferns, which have been covered with snow, and the grass are still quite green. The skunk-cabbage in the water is already pushed up, and I find the pinkish head of flowers within its spathe bigger than a pea.

It is remarkable that no pains is taken to teach children to distinguish colors. I am myself uncertain about the names of many.

Jan. 29. We must be very active if we would be clean and live our own life, and not a languishing and

scurvy one. The trees, which are stationary, are covered with parasites, especially those which have grown slowly. The air is filled with the fine sporules of countless mosses, algæ, lichens, fungi, which settle and plant themselves on all quiet surfaces. Under the nails and between the joints of the fingers of the idle, flourish crops of mildew, algæ, and fungi, and other vegetable sloths, though they may be invisible, — the lichens where life still exists, the fungi where decomposition has begun to take place. And the sluggard is soon covered with sphagnum. Algæ take root in the corners of his eyes, and lichens cover the bulbs of his fingers and his head, etc., etc., the lowest forms of vegetable life. This is the definition of dirt. We fall a prey to others of nature's tenants, who take possession of the unoccupied house. With the utmost inward activity we have to wash and comb ourselves beside, to get rid of the adhering seeds. Cleanliness is by activity not to give any quiet shelf for the seeds of parasitic plants to take root on.

If he cuts pines, the woodchopper's hands are covered with pitch.

The names of plants are for the most part traced to Celtic and Arabian roots.

The forcible writer does not go far for his themes. His ideas are not far-fetched. He derives inspiration from his chagrins and his satisfactions. His theme being ever an instant one, his own gravity assists him, gives impetus to what he says. He minds his business. He does not speculate while others drudge for him.

I am often reminded that if I had bestowed on me

the wealth of Crœsus, my aims must still be the same and my means essentially the same.[1]

It still melts. I observed this afternoon that the ground where they are digging for some scales near the depot was frozen about nine inches where the snow has lain most and sixteen inches where the road was. I begin to see the tops of the grasses and stubble in the fields, which deceive me as if it were the ground itself.

That point where the sun goes down is the cynosure which attracts all eyes at sundown and half an hour before. What do all other parts of the horizon concern us? Our eyes follow the path of that great luminary. We watch for his rising, and we observe his setting. He is a companion and fellow-traveller we all have. We pity him who has his cheerless dwelling elsewhere, even in the northwest or southwest, off the high road of nature.

The snow is nearly gone from the railroad causeway.

Few are the days when the telegraph harp rises into a pure, clear melody. Though the wind may blow strong or soft, in this or that direction, naught will you hear but a low hum or murmur, or even a buzzing sound; but at length, when some undistinguishable zephyr blows, when the conditions not easy to be detected arrive, it suddenly and unexpectedly rises into melody, as if a god had touched it, and fortunate is the walker who chances to be within hearing. So is it with the lyres of bards, and for the most part it is only a feeble and ineffectual hum that comes from them, which leads you to expect the melody you do not hear. When the

[1] [*Walden*, p. 362; Riv. 507.]

gale is modified, when the favorable conditions occur, and the indescribable coincidence takes place, then there is music. Of a thousand buzzing strings, only one yields music. It is like the hum of the shaft, or other machinery, of a steamboat, which at length might become music in a divine hand. I feel greatly enriched by this telegraph.

I have come to see the clay and sand in the Cut. A reddish tinge in the earth, stains. An Indian hue is singularly agreeable, even exciting, to the eye. Here the whole bank is sliding. Even the color of the subsoil excites me, as if I were already getting near to life and vegetation. This clay is fæcal in its color also. It runs off at bottom into mere shoals, shallows, vasa, vague sand-bars, like the mammoth leaves, — makes strands.[1]

Perhaps those mother-o'-pearl clouds I described some time ago might be called rainbow flocks. The snow on the slope of the Cliffs is dotted with black specks, the seeds of the mullein which the wind has shaken out. When I strike the dry stalks, the seeds fall in a shower and color the snow black like charcoal dust or powder.

The green mosses on the rocks are evidently nourished and kept bright by the snows lying on them a part of the year.

Day before yesterday, I saw the hunters out with a dozen dogs, but only two pussies, one white and one little gray one, did I see, for so many men and dogs, who seem to set all the village astir as if the fox's trail led through it. And Stedman Buttrick, with whom I

[1] [See *Walden*, p. 337; Riv. 471.]

was walking, was excited as if in the heyday of his youth.

Heard C. lecture to-night. It was a bushel of nuts. Perhaps the most original lecture I ever heard. Ever so unexpected, not to be foretold, and so sententious that you could not look at him and take his thought at the same time. You had to give your undivided attention to the thoughts, for you were not assisted by set phrases or modes of speech intervening. There was no sloping up or down to or from his points. It was all genius, no talent. It required more close attention, more abstraction from surrounding circumstances, than any lecture I have heard. For, well as I know C., he more than any man disappoints my expectation. When I see him in the desk, hear him, I cannot realize that I ever saw him before. He will be strange, unexpected, to his best acquaintance. I cannot associate the lecturer with the companion of my walks. It was from so original and peculiar a point of view, yet just to himself in the main, that I doubt if three in the audience apprehended a tithe that he said. It was so hard to hear that doubtless few made the exertion. A thick succession of mountain passes and no intermediate slopes and plains. Other lectures, even the best, in which so much space is given to the elaborate development of a few ideas, seemed somewhat meagre in comparison. Yet it would be how much more glorious if talent were added to genius, if there [were] a just arrangement and development of the thoughts, and each step were not a leap, but he ran a space to take a yet higher leap!

Most of the spectators sat in front of the performer,

but here was one who, by accident, sat all the while on one side, and his report was peculiar and startling.

Jan. 30. *Friday.* I feel as if I were gradually parting company with certain friends, just as I perceive familiar objects successively disappear when I am leaving my native town in the cars.

It is an encouraging piece of news, when I read in the *Weekly Tribune*, appended to an article on "The Liquor Groceries" which had appeared in the Daily, close as the moral to the fable or its operation to the medicine, that the worst of those establishments had refused to receive the *Tribune*, being offended by its disclosures; showing that the arrow has already reached its mark before we distant readers have heard its whiz.

One must not complain that his friend is cold, for heat is generated between them.

I doubt if Emerson could trundle a wheelbarrow through the streets, because it would be out of character. One needs to have a comprehensive character.

Channing's lecture was full of wise, acute, and witty observations, yet most of the audience did not know but it was mere incoherent and reckless verbiage and nonsense. I lose my respect for people who do not know what is good and true. I know full well that readers and hearers, with the fewest exceptions, ask me for my second best.

Lindley (apparently) in Loudon asks, when you have referred a plant to its class and order in the Linnæan system, "What more has been acquired than the bare knowledge that the plant in question pos-

sesses a certain number of stamens and styles? No possible notion can be formed of the relation it bears to other plants of the same nature, of the qualities it probably possesses, or of the structure of those parts not under examination, the fruit for example; and, finally, if it were wished to convey an idea of the plant to a stranger, no means would be in the possession of the Linnæan botanist of doing so, except by stating that the plant belonged to Pentandria Monogynia, for example, which is stating nothing. But what would be the condition of the student of the natural affinities of plants in a similar case? It is true he would be obliged to consult more characters than the two uninfluential ones of Linnæus — it would be necessary to ascertain if his subject was Vascular or Cellular; if Vascular, whether it was Monocotyledonous or Dicotyledonous; if Dicotyledonous, whether the leaves were opposite or alternate, stipulate or exstipulate, whether the flowers were monopetalous, polypetalous, or apetalous, the nature and station of the stamens, the condition of the ovarium, and so on. But when he *has* ascertained thus much, only let it be remembered, for a moment, how much he has gained indirectly as well as directly. Perhaps he has discovered that his plant belongs to Rubiaceæ; he will then have learned that all vegetables with opposite entire stipulate leaves, and a monopetalous superior corolla, are also Rubiaceous; if a fragment of the leaves and stem only of such a plant were afterwards submitted to him for examination, he would recognize its affinities, and remember that it was Rubiaceous, and being aware of that fact, he

would be able safely to infer that its calyx and corolla would be of a particular nature, that if the roots afforded any color for dyeing, it would be red; that the medicinal properties of the bark, if any, would be tonic, astringent, and febrifugal, and that its seeds would be of the same nature as those of coffee, and finally, its geographical position would be tolerably certain to him."

No good introduction to the study of the natural system, but such a work expected from Lindley in 1829.

But after all, where is the flower lore? for the first book, and not the last, should contain the poetry of flowers. The natural system may tell us the value of a plant in medicine or the arts or for food, but neither it nor the Linnæan, to any great extent, tells us its chief value and significance to man, which in any measure accounts for its beauty, its flower-like properties. There will be pages about some fair flower's qualities as food or medicine, but perhaps not a sentence about its significance to the eye, as if the cowslip were better for greens than for yellows. Not about what children and all flower-lovers gather flowers for. Are they emissaries sent forth by the arts to purvey and explore for them? Not how good they are to wear on the bosom, or to smell, how much they are to the eye and the sentiments, not how much to the palate and the sensations, — flowers as flowers. Not addressed to the cook or the physician or the dyer merely, but to the lovers of flowers, young and old. The most poetical of books. It should have the beauty

and the fragrance of flowers, some of their color. A keepsake! What a keepsake a manual of botany! In which is uttered, breathed, man's love of flowers. It is dry as a *hortus siccus*. Flowers are pressed into the botanist's service.[1]

Do nothing merely out of good resolutions. Discipline yourself only to yield to love; suffer yourself to be attracted. It is in vain to write on chosen themes. We must wait till they have kindled a flame in our minds. There must be the copulating and generating force of love behind every effort destined to be successful. The cold resolve gives birth to, begets, nothing. The theme that seeks me, not I it. The poet's relation to his theme is the relation of lovers. It is no more to be courted. Obey, report.

Though they are cutting off the woods at Walden, it is not all loss. It makes some new and unexpected prospects. We read books about logging in the Maine woods as if it were wholly strange to these parts. But I here witness almost exactly the same things, scenes that might be witnessed in Maine or New Hampshire: the logger's team, his oxen on the ice chewing the cud, the long pine tree, stripped of its branches, chained upon his sled, resting on a stout cross-bar or log and trailing behind, the smoke of his fire curling up blue amid the trees, the sound of the axe and of the teamsters' voices. A pretty forest scene, seeing oxen, so patient and stationary, good for pictures, standing on the ice, — a piece of still life. Oh, it is refreshing to see, to think of, these things after hearing of the dis-

[1] *Vide* forward about child plucking flower.

cussions and politics of the day! The smoke I saw was quite blue. As I stood on the partially cleared bank at the east end of the pond, I looked south over the side of the hill into a deep dell still wooded, and I saw, not more than thirty rods off, a chopper at his work. I was half a dozen rods distant from the standing wood, and I saw him through a vista between two trees (it was now mainly an oak wood, the pine having been cut), and he appeared to me apparently half a mile distant, yet charmingly distinct, as in a picture of which the two trees were the frame. He was seen against the snow on the hillside beyond. I could distinguish each part of his dress perfectly, and the axe with distinct outline as he raised it above his head, the black iron against the snow, and could hear every stroke distinctly. Yet I should have deemed it ridiculous to have called to him, he appeared so distant. He appeared with the same distinctness as objects seen through a pinhole in a card. This was the effect rather than by comparison of him, his size, with the nearer trees, between which I saw him and which made the canopied roof of the grove far above his head. It was, perhaps, one of those coincidences and effects which have made men painters. I could not behold him as an actual man; he was more ideal than in any picture I have seen. He refused to be seen as actual. Far in the hollow, yet somewhat enlightened, aisles of this wooded dell. Some scenes will thus present themselves as picture. Those scenes which are picture, subjects for the pencil, are distinctly marked; they do not require the aid of genius to idealize them. They must be seen as ideal.

Nature allows of no universal secrets. The more carefully a secret is kept on one side of the globe, the larger the type it is printed in on the other. Nothing is too pointed, too personal, too immodest, for her to blazon. The relations of sex, transferred to flowers, become the study of ladies in the drawing-room. While men wear fig leaves, she grows the *Phallus impudicus* and *P. caninus* and other phallus-like fungi.

The rhymes which I used to see on the walls of privies, scribbled by boys, I have lately seen, word for word the same; in spite [of] whitewash and brick walls and admonitions they survive. They are no doubt older than Orpheus, and have come down from an antiquity as remote as mythology or fable. So, too, no doubt corporations have ever struggled in vain to obtain cleanliness in those provinces. Filth and impurity are as old as cleanliness and purity. To correspond to man completely, Nature is even perhaps unchaste herself. Or perchance man's impurity begets a monster somewhere, to proclaim his sin. The poetry of the jakes, — it flows as perennially as the gutter.

I am afraid to travel much or to famous places, lest it might completely dissipate the mind. Then I am sure that what we observe at home, if we observe anything, is of more importance than what we observe abroad. The far-fetched is of the least value. What we observe in travelling are to some extent the accidents of the body, but [what] we observe when sitting at home are, in the same proportion, phenomena of the mind itself. A wakeful night will yield as much thought as a long journey. If I try thoughts by their quality, not their

quantity, I may find that a restless night will yield more than the longest journey.

I live in an age when men have agreed to say "God" instead of "Jove."

It is remarkable that there is no man so coarse and insensible but he can be profane, can pronounce the word "God" with emphasis in the woods when anything happens to disturb, as a spoiled child loves to see what liberties he can presume to take. I am only astonished that B—— should think it any daring; that he should believe in God so much. Then look round to see if the auditors appreciated his boldness.

Jan. 31. We hear the sounds of screech owls in our nostrils, and the snoring of men is perhaps not to be distinguished from that of pigs.

—— [*sic*] is too grand for me. He belongs to the nobility and wears their cloak and manners; is attracted to Plato, not to Socrates, I fear partly because the latter's life and associates were too humble. I am a commoner. To me there is something devilish in manners. The best manners is nakedness of manners. I should value E.'s praise more, which is always so discriminating, if there were not some alloy of patronage and hence of flattery about [it]. In that respect he is like —— [*sic*];[1] they flatter you, but themselves more. Praise should be spoken as simply and naturally as a flower emits its fragrance.

I am repeatedly astonished by the coolness and ob-

[1] [The first dash (made in pencil) stands for a single initial carefully scratched out; the second, for a full name, also erased.]

tuse bigotry with which some will appropriate the New Testament in conversation with you. It is as if they were to appropriate the sun and stand between you and it, because they understood that you had walked once by moonlight, though that was in the reflected light of the sun, which you could not get directly. I have seen two persons conversing at a tea-table, both lovers of the New Testament, each in his own way, the one a lover of all kindred expression of truth also; and yet the other appropriated the New Testament wholly to herself, and took it for granted, with singular or rather lamentable blindness and obtuseness, that the former neither knew nor cared anything about it. Horace Greeley found some fault with me to the world because I presumed to speak of the New Testament using my own words and thoughts, and challenged me to a controversy. The one thought I had was that it would give me real pleasure to know that he loved it as sincerely and enlightenedly as I did; but I felt that he did not care so much about it as I.

Botanies, instead of being the poetry, are the prose, of flowers. I do not mean to underrate Linnæus's admirable nomenclature, much of which is itself poetry.

Moreover, if you [are] restricted in your range by poverty, if you cannot buy books and newspapers, you are but confined to the most significant and vital experiences, you are compelled to deal with the material which yields the most sugar and the most starch. You are defended from being a trifler. No man loses, even on a lower level, by magnanimity on a higher. Super-

fluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul.[1]

Not the same things are great to all men. Many of the words which we write with capital letters are not so distinguished by those who live at a distance.

That work of man's must be vast indeed which, like the Pyramids, looks blue in the horizon, as mountains. Few works of man rise high enough, and with breadth enough, to be blued by the air between them and the spectator.

In the East, women religiously conceal that they have faces; in the West, that they have legs. In both cases they make it evident that they have but little brains.

I hear my friend say, "I have lost my faith in men; there are none true, magnanimous, holy," etc., etc., meaning, all the while, that I do not possess those unattainable virtues; but, worm as I am, this is not wise in my friend, and I feel simply discouraged so far as my relation to him is concerned. We must have infinite faith in each other. If we have not, we must never let it leak out that we have not. He erects his want of faith as a barrier between us. When I hear grown man or woman say, "Once I had faith in men; now I have not," I am inclined to ask, "Who are you whom the world has disappointed? Have not you rather disappointed the world? There is the same ground for faith now that ever there was. It needs only a little love in you who complain so to ground it on." For my own part, I am thankful that there are those who come

[1] [*Walden*, p. 362; Riv. 507.]

so near being my friends that they can be estranged from me. I had faith before they would destroy the little I have. The mason asks but a narrow shelf to spring his brick from; man requires only an infinitely narrower one to spring the arch of faith from.

What can I do? There is one whom I would fain call my friend. I feel disposed to practice any virtue. I am at liberty to do so. But it chances that at present I feel no sympathy with, no warmth toward, him. I am capable of sympathy and of warmth. What can I do? The universal laws will work; I must condemn what is wrong in him as well as in another. I cannot act a part. I submit myself. Do what you will with us, O ye gods!

See what a swift penalty you have to pay. If you say to your friend that he is less than an angel, he is your friend no longer.

The only ledge I can spring the arch of friendship from is the ground of infinite faith. If you have lost any of your faith in me, you might as well have lost it all. How can you renounce and retain at the same time?

One woman whom I visit sometimes thinks I am conceited, and yet wonders that I do not visit her oftener. If I were sure she was right perhaps I should. Now this is a sad obstacle in the way of hearty communications. As, naturally enough, we are not agreed on that point, our sympathy is lessened. Another with whom I converse a good deal allows that sometimes my actions are better than my principles as expressed in conversation.

I am not sure that I have any right to address to you the words I am about to write. The reason I have not visited you oftener and more earnestly is that I am offended by your pride, your sometime assumption of dignity, your manners, which come over me like waves of Lethe. I know that if I stood in that relation to you which you seem to ask, I should not be met. Perhaps I am wiser than you think. Do you never for an instant treat me as a thing, flatter me? You treat me with politeness, and I make myself scarce. We have not sympathy enough. We do not always apprehend each other. You talk to me often as if I were Mr. Tompkins of the firm of —— ——, retired merchant. If I had never thought of you as a friend, I could make much use of you as an acquaintance.

I observed this afternoon, on the Turnpike, that where it drifts over the edge of a brook or a ditch, the snow being damp as it falls, what does not adhere to the sharp edge of the drift falls on the dead weeds and shrubs and forms a drapery like a napkin or a white table-cloth hanging down with folds and tassels or fringed border. Or perhaps the fresh snow merely rounds and whitens thus the old cores. It was like looking from one side of a rich white counterpane or table-cloth where it hangs over the side of the bed or table.

The value of the pitch pine in winter is that it holds the snow so finely. I see it now afar on the hillsides decking itself with it, its whited towers forming coverts where the rabbit and the gray squirrel lurk. It makes the most cheerful winter scenery beheld from the window, you know so well the nature of the coverts and

the sombre light it makes. The young oaks, with their red leaves, covering so many acres, are also an indispensable feature of the winter landscape, and the limbs of oak woods where some of the trees have been cut off.

V

FEBRUARY, 1852

(ÆT. 34)

Feb. 1. When I hear that a friend on whom I relied has spoken of me, not with cold words perhaps, but even with a cold and indifferent tone, to another, ah! what treachery I feel it to be! — the sum of all crimes against humanity. My friend may cherish a thousand suspicions against me, and they may but represent his faith and expectations, till he cherishes them so heartlessly that he can speak of them.

If I have not succeeded in my friendships, it was because I demanded more of them and did not put up with what I could get; and I got no more partly because I gave so little.

I must be dumb to those who, I have not faith, appreciate my actions, not knowing the springs of them.

While we preach obedience to human laws and to that portion of the divine laws set forth in the New Testament, the natural laws of genius, of love and friendship, we do not preach nor insist upon. How many a seeming heartlessness is to be explained by the very abundance of the heart! How much of seeming recklessness, even selfishness, is to be explained by obedience to this code of the divine laws! It is evident that as buyers and sellers we obey a very different law from what we do as lovers and friends. The Hindoo is

not to be tried in all things by the Christian standard, nor the Christian by the Hindoo. How much fidelity to law of a kind not commonly recognized, how much magnanimity even, may be thrown away on mankind! is like pearls cast before swine! The hero obeys his own law, the Christian his, the lover and friend theirs; they are to some extent different codes. What incessant tragedy between men when one silently obeys the code of friendship, the other the code of philanthropy, in their dealings with one another. As our constitutions, our geniuses, are different, so are our standards, and we are amenable to different codes. My neighbor asks me in vain to be good as he is good. I must be good as I am made to be good, whether I am heathen or Christian. Every man's laws are hard enough to obey. The Christian falls as far short of obeying the heathen's moral law as the heathen does. One of little faith looks for his rewards and punishments to the next world, and, despairing of this world, behaves accordingly in it; another thinks the present a worthy occasion and arena, sacrifices to it, and expects to hear sympathizing voices. The man who believes in another world and not in this is wont to put me off with Christianity. The present moment in which we talk is of a little less value to him than the next world. So we are said to hope in proportion as we do not realize. It is all hope deferred. But one grain of realization, of instant life, on which we stand, is equivalent to acres of the leaf of hope hammered out to gild our prospect. The former so qualifies the vision that it gilds all that we look upon with the foil of truth. We must meet the hero

on heroic grounds. Some tribes inhabit the mountains; some dwell on the plain. We discourage one another. We obey different laws.

Is not the midnight like Central Africa to most? Are we not tempted to explore it, to penetrate to the shores of its Lake Tchad, to discover the sources of its Nile, perchance in the Mountains of the Moon? Who knows what fertility, what beauty in the animal and vegetable kingdom, are there to be found,[1] what primeval simplicity and reflection of the truth among its dusky inhabitants? We illuminate only the first hours of the night. The light behind the face of the clock on the State-House in Philadelphia extinguished at 11 o'clock P. M. with punctuality, to save oil. Those hours are resigned to a few watchmen in the cities, watching for the disgrace of humanity. Shall we never have watchmen on the country's hills, of another sort, watching for the glory of God? Watch on city walls for a foe, not on country hills for a friend!

In the Mountains of the Moon, in the Central Africa of the night, — there is where all Niles hide their heads. The expeditions up the Niles extend but to the Cataracts, past the ruins of Thebes, or perchance to the mouth of the White Nile; but it is the Black Nile that concerns us.[2] Of some of the great rivers, like the Nile and the Orinoco (?), men still only conjecture the sources.

Shall we put our heads out the chamber window and ask the watchmen, the city police, to tell us of the night, — what its signs of gladness are? Are these the

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 323; Riv. 397.] [2] [*Ibid.*]

questions we shall put to the watchmen? Who, then, shall we put them to? Or is there none who can answer them?

Each thing is attracted to each, and running to coalesce like drops of water. The fingers incline to be webbed and run together. When I hold mine up to the light and bring them near together, such are the laws of light that, just before they touch, a web appears to grow on them and unite them. So of objects seen through imperfections in glass.

It depends upon how a man has spent his day, whether he has any right to be in his bed. So spend some hours that you may have a right to sleep in the sunshine.

My friends! my friends! it does not cheer me to see them. They but express their want of faith in me or in mankind; their coldest, cruelest thought comes clothed in polite and easy-spoken words at last. I am silent to their invitations, because I do not *feel* invited, and we have no reasons to give for what we do *not* do. One says, "Love me out of this mire;" the other says, "Come out of it and be lovely." One speaks with scorn of the scorners.

In the winter the botanist can study lichens.

The recent rush to California and the attitude of the world, even of its philosophers and prophets, in relation to it appears to me to reflect the greatest disgrace on mankind. That so many are ready to get their living by the lottery of gold-digging without contributing any value to society, and that the great majority who stay at home justify them in this both by precept and

example! It matches the infatuation of the Hindoos who have cast themselves under the car of Juggernaut. I know of no more startling development of the morality of trade and all the modes of getting a living than the rush to California affords. Of what significance the philosophy, or poetry, or religion of a world that will rush to the lottery of California gold-digging on the receipt of the first news, to live by luck, to get the means of commanding the labor of others less lucky, *i. e.* of slaveholding, without contributing any value to society? And that is called enterprise, and the devil is only a little more enterprising! The philosophy and poetry and religion of such a mankind are not worth the dust of a puffball. The hog that *roots* his own living, and so makes manure, would be ashamed of such company. If I could command the wealth of all the worlds by lifting my finger, I would not pay such a price for it. It makes God to be a moneyed gentleman who scatters a handful of pennies in order to see mankind scramble for them. Going to California. It is only three thousand miles nearer to hell. I will resign my life sooner than live by luck. The world's raffle. A subsistence in the domains of nature a thing to be raffled for! No wonder that they gamble there. I never heard that they did anything else there. What a comment, what a satire, on our institutions! The conclusion will be that mankind will hang itself upon a tree. And who would interfere to cut it down. And have all the precepts in all the bibles taught men only this? and is the last and most admirable invention of the Yankee race only an improved muck-rake? — patented too!

If one came hither to sell lottery tickets, bringing satisfactory credentials, and the prizes were seats in heaven, this world would buy them with a rush.[1]

Did God direct us so to get our living, digging where we never planted, — and He would perchance reward us with lumps of gold?[2] It is a text, oh! for the Jonahs of this generation, and yet the pulpits are as silent as immortal Greece [?], silent, some of them, because the preacher is gone to California himself. The gold of California is a touchstone which has betrayed the rottenness, the baseness, of mankind. Satan, from one of his elevations, showed mankind the kingdom of California, and they entered into a compact with him at once.

God gave a man a certificate of righteousness which entitled him to food and raiment, but the rest were discontented and envied him. But at last news came that one had discovered a depository of like certificates, intended also for the righteous in times to come, and a cry went up from all lands, and sinners rushed thither from all parts and appropriated them.

God gave the righteous man a certificate entitling him to food and raiment, but the unrighteous man found a facsimile of the same in God's coffers, and appropriated it, and obtained food and raiment like the former.[3]

There are some things which God may afford to smile at; man cannot.

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 463, 464; *Misc.*, Riv. 263, 264.]
[2] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 464; *Misc.*, Riv. 264.]
[3] [*Ibid.*]

Feb. 2. Sir Francis Head says that in America "the moon looks larger" than in Europe. Here, then, more moonshine is to be expected. Perhaps the sun looks larger also. Such are the advantages of the New World.

The same writer says, "the heavens of America appear infinitely higher," "the stars are brighter." These, too, are encouraging facts, symbolical of the height to which the philosophy and poetry and religion of her inhabitants may one day soar. At length, perchance, the immaterial heaven will appear as much higher to the American mind, and the intimations that star it will appear as much brighter. For I believe that climate does thus react on man, and that there is something in the mountain air that feeds the spirit and inspires. We shall be more imaginative; we shall be clearer, as our sky, bluer, fresher; broader and more comprehensive in our understanding, like our plains; our intellect on a grander scale, like our thunder and lightning, our rivers and our lakes, and mountains and forests. Are not these advantages? Will not man grow to greater perfection intellectually as well as physically under these influences? Or is it unimportant how many foggy days there are in his life? [1]

Sir F. Head thinks that the greater cold — equal to thirteen degrees of latitude — in this country is owing to the extensive forests, which prevent the sun and wind from melting the snows, which therefore accumulate on the ground and create a cold stratum of air, which, blown to warmer ones by the northwest wind, condenses the last into snow. But, in Concord woods at

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 222; Riv. 272, 273.]

any rate, the snow (in the winter) melts faster, and beside is not so deep as in the fields. Not so toward spring, on the north sides of hills and in hollows. At any rate I think he has not allowed enough for the warmth of the woods.

The moose (and beaver?) will, perchance, one day become extinct, but how naturally would a future poet imagine or sculptor carve a fabulous animal with such branching and leafy horns, when this will in fact exist as a fossil relic! His horns a sort of fucus in bone, or a lichen. The elk (moose) may stand with the gryphon and dragon and dodo, etc., etc.

The fireflies and bright-plumaged birds! do not they too indicate the peculiarities of the future American?

Head "felt that there was something indescribably awful and appalling in all these bestial, birdal, and piscal precautions" at the approach of winter, — going into winter quarters, migrating, etc.

Head, coming to Canada in the winter, to a house in the fields covered with snow, did not know that he was surrounded by a lawn and garden, with gravelled walks, flowers, and shrubbery, till the spring thawed the snow.

The race that settles and clears the land has got to deal with every tree in the forest in succession. It must be resolute and industrious, and even the stumps must be got out, — or are. It is a thorough process, this war with the wilderness, — breaking nature, taming the soil, feeding it on oats. The civilized man regards the pine tree as his enemy. He will fell it and let in the light, grub it up and raise wheat or rye there. It is no better than a fungus to him.

It is natural that we should be enterprising, for we are descended from the enterprising, who sought to better their fortunes in the New World.

The Yankee has no leisure to touch his hat to you, even if he were so disposed.[1]

Feb. 3. When I review the list of my acquaintances from the most impartial point of view, and consider each one's excesses and defects of character, — which are the subject of mutual ridicule, astonishment, and pity, — and I class myself among them, — I cannot help asking myself, "If this is the sane world, what must a madhouse be?" It is only by a certain flattery and an ignoring of their faults that even the best are made available for society.

I have been to the libraries (yesterday) at Cambridge and Boston. It would seem as if all things compelled us to originality. How happens it that I find not in the country, in the fields and woods, the *works* even of like-minded naturalists and poets. Those who have expressed the purest and deepest love of nature have not recorded it on the bark of the trees with the lichens; they have left no memento of it there; but if I would read their books I must go to the city, — so strange and repulsive both to them and to me, — and deal with men and institutions with whom I have no sympathy. When I have just been there on this errand, it seems too great a price to pay for access even to the works of Homer, or Chaucer, or Linnæus. Greece and Asia Minor should henceforth bear Iliads and Odysseys as their trees lichens.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 47; Riv. 59.]

But no! if the works of nature are to any extent collected in the forest, the works of man are to a still greater extent collected in the city. I have sometimes imagined a library, *i. e.* a collection of the works of true poets, philosophers, naturalists, etc., deposited not in a brick or marble edifice in a crowded and dusty city, guarded by cold-blooded and methodical officials and preyed on by bookworms, in which you own no share, and are not likely to, but rather far away in the depths of a primitive forest, like the ruins of Central America, where you can trace a series of crumbling alcoves, the older books protecting the most modern from the elements, partially buried by the luxuriance of nature, which the heroic student could reach only after adventures in the wilderness amid wild beasts and wild men. That, to my imagination, seems a fitter place for these interesting relics, which owe no small part of their interest to their antiquity, and whose occasion is nature, than the well-preserved edifice, with its well-preserved officials on the side of a city's square. More terrible than lions and tigers these Cerberuses.

Access to nature for original observation is secured by one ticket, by one kind of expense, but access to the works of your predecessors by a very different kind of expense. All things tend to cherish the originality of the original. Nature, at least, takes no pains to introduce him to the works of his predecessors, but only presents him with her own *Opera Omnia.*

Is it the lover of nature who has access to all that has been written on the subject of his favorite studies? No; he lives far away from this. It is the lover of

books and systems, who knows nature chiefly at second hand.

The botanists have a phrase, *mantissa*, as *Mantissa Plantarum* (Linnæus), which I suppose means an overmeasure or additional matter about. A convenient term.[1] Also *prodromus*, as a forerunner, or preparer of the way.

"Suent" is an expressive word, applied to machinery whose joints are worn, which has got into working order, — apparently from *sueo*, to be accustomed. So of the writer's faculties.

About 6 P. M. walked to Cliffs *via* railroad.

Snow quite deep. The sun had set without a cloud in the sky, — a rare occurrence, but I missed the clouds, which make the glory of evening. The sky must have a few clouds, as the mind a few moods; nor is the evening the less serene for them. There is only a tinge of red along the horizon. The moon is nearly full tonight, and the moment is passed when the light in the east (*i. e.* of the moon) balances the light in the west. With the Latins, apparently, there was afternoon, *tempus pomeridianum* or *post meridiem;* then perhaps sunset, *sole occidente*, when *sol inclinat vel decedit;* then perhaps evening, when the evening star reigns, *vespera* (ἕως πέρας).[2] *Vesperascit*, the evening approaches. (By the way, a studying, or working, by candle-light is a *lucubratio a luce* — study all night is *elucubratio* — also *labor vespertinus*. *Serotinus* also means "in the

[1] [Channing, p. 299.]

[2] [Ἕως πέρας signifies "until the end," and is evidently given as the derivation of the Greek ἑσπέρα and Latin *vespera*.]

evening," and more than that, for Pliny says, *Praecocibus brevior [vita]*[1] *quam serotinis*, which cannot be expressed so elegantly in English.) After sundown I should have put twilight, *crepusculum* (*crepera lux* or doubtful light). Then comes decided night or *nox*, *multa nox*. Staying up all night, *pervigilium* or *pervigilatio*. The night far spent, *nox adulta*. Midnight, *nox silens vel profunda*, *meridies noctis*. A starlight night, *nox sideria*. Night-shining, *noctu lucens*. I would not be a mere *tenebrio* or *lucifugus*, shunning the daylight and delighting to skulk in darkness, but simply I am a *noctivagus*. My walk may be *pernox* but not *perniciosus*. They are *Vigiliae Nocturnae*. That little bird that I hear and call the night-warbler may be translated, *Noctu suave canens*. When the moon does not shine all night, it is not a *pernox luna*.

Selenite "is a stone (as is said) in Arabia, wherein is a white, which decreases and increases with the moon" (Dictionary). My summer journal was selenitic in this sense.[2] It had this white spot in it.

Venus is now like a little moon in the west, and the lights in the village twinkle like stars. It is perfectly still and not very cold. The shadows of the trees on the snow are more minutely distinct than at any other season, not dark masses merely, but finely reticulated, each limb and twig represented, as cannot be in summer, both from the leaves and the inequality and darkness of the ground. The heavens appear less thickly starred and less habitable than in summer, — rather

[1] [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

[2] [*Excursions*, p. 323; Riv. 397.]

a few bright stars, brought nearer by this splendid twinkling in the cold sky, than countless points in the warm deeps. I hear my old acquaintance, the owl, from the causeway.

The reflector of the cars, as I stand over the Deep Cut, makes a large and dazzling light in this air. The cars do not make much noise, or else I am used to it; and now whizzes the boiling, sizzling kettle by me, in which the passengers make me think of potatoes, which a fork would show to be done by this time. The steam is denser for the cold, and more white; like the purest downy clouds in the summer sky, its volumes roll up between me and the moon, and far behind, when the cars are a mile off, it still goes shading the fields with its wreaths, — the breath of the panting traveller. I now cross from the railroad to the road. This snow, the last of which fell day before yesterday, is two feet deep, pure and powdery. There is but little on the trees except the pitch pines. From a myriad little crystal mirrors the moon is reflected, which is the untarnished sparkle of its surface. I hear a gentle rustling of the oak leaves as I go through the woods, but this snow has yet no troops of leaves on its surface. The snow evidently by its smooth crust assists in the more equal dispersion and distribution of the leaves which course over it, blown by the [wind], and perchance for this reason the oak leaves and some others hang on.

Now through the Spring Woods and up Fair Haven Hill. Here, in the midst of a clearing where the choppers have been leaving the woods in pieces to-day, and the tops of the pine trees are strewn about half buried

in snow, only the saw-logs being carried off, it is stiller and milder than by day, and I think the chopper might work here more comfortably in some respects now, but he is at home in the village, getting rest or recreation. Instead of the sound of his axe, I hear the hooting of an owl, *nocturnus ululatus*, whose haunts he is laying waste. The ground is all pure white powdery snow, which his sled, etc., has stirred up, except the scattered twigs and pine plumes. I can see every track distinctly where the teamster drove his oxen to the choppers' piles and loaded his sled, and even the tracks of his dog in the moonlight, and plainly to write this.

The moonlight now is very splendid in the untouched pine woods above the Cliffs, alternate patches of shade and light. The light has almost the brightness of sunlight, the fulgor. The stems of the trees are more obvious than by day, being simple black against the moonlight and the snow. The sough of the breeze in the pine-tops sounds far away, like the surf on a distant shore, and for all sound beside there is only the rattling or chafing of little dry twigs, — perchance a little snow falling on them, or they are so brittle that they break and fall with the motion of the trees.

My owl sounds *hōō hŏō hōō, hōō.*

The landscape covered with snow, seen by moonlight from these Cliffs, encased in snowy armor two feet thick, gleaming in the moon and of spotless white. Who can believe that this is the habitable globe? The scenery is wholly arctic. Fair Haven Pond is a Baffin's Bay. Man must have ascertained the limits of the winter before he ventured to withstand it and not migrate

with the birds. No cultivated field, no house, no candle. All is as dreary as the shores of the Frozen Ocean. I can tell where there is wood and where open land for many miles in the horizon by the darkness of the former and whiteness of the latter. The trees, especially the young oaks covered with leaves, stand out distinctly in this bright light from contrast with the snow. It looks as if the snow and ice of the arctic world, travelling like a glacier, had crept down southward and overwhelmed and buried New England. And see if a man can think his summer thoughts now. But the evening star is preparing to set, and I will return. Floundering through snow, sometimes up to my middle.

Is not the sky unusually blue to-night? dark blue? Is it not always bluer when the ground is covered with snow in the winter than in summer?

The forcible writer stands bodily behind his words with his experience. He does not make books out of books, but he has been *there* in person.

Head calls the "sough" an "æolian murmur."

That is a good mythological incident told of the wounded farmer who, his foot being lacerated and held fast between his plow and a fallen tree in a forest clearing, drew his oxen to him, with difficulty smeared their horns with blood which the mosquitoes had drawn from his bare arms, and, cutting the reins [*sic*], sent them home as an advertisement to his family.

Feb. 4. *Wednesday.* A mild, thawy day. The needles of the pine are the touchstone for the air; any change in that element is revealed to the practiced eye

by their livelier green or increased motion. They are the telltales. Now they are (the white pine) a cadaverous, misty blue; anon a lively, silvery light plays on them, and they seem to erect themselves unusually; while the pitch pines are a brighter yellowish-green than usual. The sun loves to nestle in the boughs of the pine and pass rays through them.

The scent of bruised pine leaves where a sled has passed is a little exciting to me now. I saw this afternoon such lively blood-red colors on a white pine stump recently cut that at first I thought the chopper had cut himself. The heart of the tree was partly decayed, and here and there the sounder parts were of this vermilion (?) color, alternating with the ordinary white of the wood. Here it was apparently in the earlier stages of decay. The color was the livelier for being wet with the melting snow.

11 P. M. — Coming home through the village by this full moonlight, it seems one of the most glorious nights I ever beheld. Though the pure snow is so deep around, the air, by contrast perhaps with the recent days, is mild and even balmy to my senses, and the snow is still sticky to my feet and hands. And the sky is the most glorious blue I ever beheld, even a light blue on some sides, as if I actually saw into day, while small white, fleecy clouds, at long intervals, are drifting from west-northwest to south-southeast. If you would know the direction of the wind, look not at the clouds, which are such large bodies and confuse you, but consider in what direction the moon appears to be wading through them. The outlines of the elms were never more distinctly seen

than now. It seems a slighting of the gifts of God to go to sleep now; as if we could better afford to close our eyes to daylight, of which we see so much. Has not this blueness of the sky the same cause with the blueness in the holes in the snow, and in some distant shadows on the snow? — if, indeed, it is true that the sky is bluer in winter when the ground is covered with snow.

Heard Professor Blasius lecture on the tornado this evening. He said that nine vessels were wrecked daily in the world on an average; that Professor Dove of Berlin was the best meteorologist in his opinion, but had not studied the effects of wind in the fields so much as some here.

These nights are warmer than the days; but by morning it is colder.

Head's theory of American cold, founded on the unmelted snows of our forests, reminds me of the fish and bucket of water dispute. Is it a fact that such vast quantities of snow are slow to melt in our forests?

The audience are never tired of hearing how far the wind carried some man, woman, or child, or family Bible, but they are immediately tired if you undertake to give them a scientific account of it.

Feb. 5. Suppose that an equal ado were made about the *ornaments* of style in literature (as in architecture), should we be any more likely to attain to a truly beautiful and forcible style? Buonaparte said pretty truly, "Speak plain; the rest will follow." I do not believe that any writer who considered the ornaments, and not the truth simply, ever succeeded. So are made the

belles lettres and the *beaux arts* and their *professors*, which we can do without.[1]

The sky last night was a deeper, more cerulean blue than the far lighter and whiter sky of to-day.

The national flag is the emblem of patriotism, and whether that floats over the Government House or not is, even in times of peace, an all-absorbing question. The hearts of millions flutter with it. Men do believe in symbols yet and can understand some. When Sir F. Head left his Government in Upper Canada and the usual farewell had been said as the vessel moved off, he, standing on the deck, pointed for all reply to the British flag floating over his head, and a shriek, rather than a cheer, went up from the crowd on the pier, who had observed his gesture. One of the first things he had done was to run it up over the Government House at Toronto, and it made a great sensation.

Time never passes so rapidly and unaccountably as when I am engaged in recording my thoughts. The world may perchance reach its end for us in a profounder thought, and Time itself run down.

I suspect that the child plucks its first flower with an insight into its beauty and significance which the subsequent botanist never retains.

The trunks and branches of the trees are of different colors at different times and in different lights and weathers, — in sun, rain, and in the night. The oaks bare of leaves on Hubbard's hillside are now a light gray in the sun, and their boughs, seen against the pines behind, are a very agreeable maze. The stems

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 52, 53; Riv. 77.]

of the white pines also are quite gray at this distance, with their lichens. I am detained to contemplate the boughs, feathery boughs, of the white pines, tier above tier, reflecting a silvery light, with intervals between them through which you look, if you so intend your eye, into the darkness of the grove. That is, you can see both the silvery-lighted and greenish bough and the shadowy intervals as belonging to one tree, or, more truly, refer the latter to the shade behind.

Read the Englishman's history of the French and Indian wars, and then read the Frenchman's, and see how each awards the meed of glory to the other's monsters of cruelty or perfidy.

We have all sorts of histories of wars. One omits the less important skirmishes altogether, another condescends to give you the result of these and the number of killed and wounded, and if you choose to go further and consult tradition and old manuscripts or town and local histories, you may learn whether the parson was killed by a shot through the door or tomahawked at the well.

Feb. 6. If the woodchopper rises early, shall not the scholar sit up late?

I have been told at the pattern-room of certain print-works that the taste of the public in respect to these things was singularly whimsical, and that it was impossible to foretell what would most take with it. Of two patterns which differed only by a few threads more or less of a particular color, the one would be sold readily, the other would be unsalable, thus occasioning great

loss to the manufacturer; though it frequently happened that after the lapse of a season the unsalable goods became the most fashionable.[1]

If a poor man returns to a gentleman his purse, which he has found, the bystanders are astonished at his honesty, and if the gentleman does not reward him munificently, they make up a purse for him themselves.

Tuckerman very well refers science to the medicine-man of the savages. He took the first step toward science.

Dioscorides, "the second father of Botany," — what a flowery name!

The artificial system has been very properly called the dictionary, and the natural method, the grammar, of the science of botany, by botanists themselves. But are we to have nothing but grammars and dictionaries in this literature? Are there no works written in the language of the flowers?

I asked a learned and accurate naturalist, who is at the same time the courteous guardian of a public library, to direct me to those works which contained the more particular *popular* account, or *biography*, of particular flowers, from which the botanies I had met with appeared to draw sparingly, — for I trusted that each flower had had many lovers and faithful describers in past times, — but he informed me that I had read all; that no one was acquainted with them, they were only catalogued like his books.

3 P. M. Round by C. Miles's place.

It is still thawy. A mistiness makes the woods look denser, darker, and more imposing. Seen through this

[1] [*Walden*, p. 29; Riv. 44.]

veil, they are more grand and primitive. Near the C. Miles house there are some remarkably yellow lichens (parmelias?) on the rails, — ever as if the sun were about to shine forth clearly. Methinks I would have lichens on some of my rails, [even] if it were not consistent with good husbandry.

Some of our days, in June perchance, may be styled all-saints' days.

Who will not confess that the necessity to get money has helped to ripen some of his schemes?

The historian of Haverhill[1] commences his account of the attack on that town in 1708 by the French and Indians, by saying that one [of] the French commanders was "the infamous Hertel de Rouville, the sacker of Deerfield," that the French of that period equalled, if they did not exceed, the Indians in acts of wantonness and barbarity, and "when the former were weary of murdering 'poor, helpless women and children,' — when they were glutted with blood, it is said that M. Vaudreuil, then Governor of Canada, employed the latter to do it." He then goes on to describe the sudden and appalling attack before sunrise, the slaughter of women and infants and the brave or cowardly conduct of the inhabitants. Rolfe and Wainwright and many others were killed. The French historian Charlevoix says of Rouville that he supplied his father's place worthily and that the Governor, Vaudreuil, called him one of the two best partisans in Canada. He tells us that Rouville made a short speech to the French

[1] [B. L. Mirick, *The History of Haverhill, Massachusetts*, Haverhill, 1832.]

before they commenced the attack, exhorting them to forget their differences and embrace one another. "And then they said their prayers" and marched to the assault. And after giving an account of the attack, and of the subsequent actions almost totally different from the former, not having said a word about the barbarities of the savages, he proceeds to enumerate the "belles actions" of some officers who showed humanity to the prisoners on the retreat.

Feb. 7. The warmer weather we have had for a few days past was particularly pleasant to the poor whose wood-piles were low, whose clothes were ragged and thin. I think how the little boy must enjoy it whom I saw a week ago with his shoes truncated at the toes. Hard are the times when the infants' shoes are second-foot.

The French historian speaks of both French and Indians as "our braves (*nos Braves*)." The village historian takes you into the village graveyard and reads the inscriptions on the monuments of the slain. Takes you to the grave of the parish priest, his wife, and child, which is honored with a Latin inscription. The French historian, who signs himself *de la Compagnie de Jésus*, who was at the waterside at Montreal when the expedition disembarked, and so heard the freshest news. To show the discrepancies, I will compare the two accounts in relation to one part of the affair alone.

The Haverhill historian says, "The retreat [of the French and Indians][1] commenced about the rising of the

[1] [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

sun." "The town, by this time, was generally alarmed. Joseph Bradley collected a small party, . . . and secured the medicine-box and packs of the enemy, which they had left about three miles from the village. Capt. Samuel Ayer, a fearless man, and of great strength, collected a body of about twenty men, and pursued the retreating foe. He came up with them just as they were entering the woods, when they faced about, and though they numbered thirteen or more to one, still Capt. Ayer did not hesitate to give them battle. These gallant men were soon reinforced by another party, under the command of his son; and after a severe skirmish, which lasted about an hour, they retook some of the prisoners, and the enemy precipitately retreated, leaving nine of their number dead.

"The French and Indians continued their retreat, and so great were their sufferings, arising from the loss of their packs, and their consequent exposure to famine, that many of the Frenchmen returned and surrendered themselves prisoners of war; and some of the captives were dismissed, with a message that, if they were pursued, the others should be put to death. Perhaps, if they had been pursued, nearly the whole of their force might have been conquered. . . . As it was, they left thirty of their number dead, in both engagements, and many were wounded, whom they carried with them."

One Joseph Bartlett, a soldier who was carried away captive but returned after some years and published a narrative of his captivity, says that after the retreat commenced, "they then marched on together,

when Capt. Eaires [Ayer], with a small company, waylaid and shot upon them, which put them to flight, so that they did not get together again until three days after." [1] His party, says the historian, had nothing to eat for four days "but a few sour grapes and thorn plums. They then killed a hawk and divided it among fifteen — the head fell to the share of Mr. Bartlett, which, he says, 'was the largest meal I had these four days.'" The historian concludes that between thirty and forty New-Englanders in all were either killed or taken prisoners.

Now for Charlevoix's account, who happened to be at the waterside at Montreal when the French party disembarked and so got the most direct and freshest news. He says: "There were about a hundred English slain in these different attacks; many others . . . were burned (in the houses), and the number of prisoners was considerable." (This was before the retreat.) "As for booty there was none at all, they did not think of it, till it had all been consumed in the flames." Speaking of the retreat, he says: "It was made with much order, each one having taken so many provisions only as was needed for the return. This precaution was even (*encore*) more necessary than they thought. Our men had hardly made half a league, when, on entering a wood, they fell into an ambuscade, which seventy men had prepared for them, who, before discovering themselves, fired each his shot. Our braves met this discharge without wavering, and fortunately it produced no great effect. Meanwhile all the rear was already full

[1] [As quoted by Mirick.]

of people on foot and on horseback, who followed them closely, and there was no other course to take but to force their way through those (*que de passer sur le ventre à ceux*) who had just fired upon them."

"They took it without hesitating, each threw away his pack of provisions, and almost all his apparel (*hardes*), and without amusing themselves with firing they came at once to a hand-to-hand contest (with them) (*sans s'amuser à tirer· ils en vinrent d'abord aux armes blanches*). The English, astonished at so vigorous an assault made by men whom they thought they had thrown into disorder, found themselves in that condition (*y*, there) and could not recover (themselves). So that, excepting ten or twelve who saved themselves by flight, all were killed or taken."

"We had in the two actions eighteen men wounded, three savages and five French killed, and in the number of the dead were two young officers of great promise, Hertel de Chambly, brother of Rouville, and Verchères. Many prisoners made in the attack on Haverhill saved themselves during the last combat."

Tuckerman says that Fries "states formally the *quaqua*versal affinity of plants, and hence rejects once more the notion of a single series in nature. He declares species 'unica in natura fixe circumscripta idea,' and hence all superior sections are more or less indefinite." Just as true is this of man, even of an individual man. He is not to be referred to, or classed with, any company. He is truly singular, and, so far as systems are concerned, in a sense abnormal ever.

Tuckerman says of Linnæus, "Who, while he indi-

cated the affinities of nature, and pronounced their explication the true end of the science of plants, yet constructed also an artificial system, which so surpassed every other, that it seemed nigh to overwhelming that very knowledge of affinities, to which, as just said, he had consecrated the whole design of Botany." Again, "Fries may be said to represent that higher school of Linnæans, which started from the great naturalist's *natural doctrine*."

The English did not come here from a mere love of adventure, to truck with the savages, or to convert the savages, or to hold offices under the crown, as the French did, but to live in earnest and with freedom. The French had no *busy-ness* here. They ran over an immense extent of country, selling strong water, and collecting its furs and converting its inhabitants, — or at least baptizing its dying infants, — without improving it. The New England youth were not *coureurs de bois*.

It was freedom to hunt and fish, not to work, that they sought. Hontan says the *coureurs de bois* lived like sailors ashore.[1]

Feb. 8. Mrs. Buttrick says that she has five cents for making a shirt, and that if she does her best she can make one in a day.

It is interesting to see loads of hay coming down from the country nowadays, — within a week. They make them very broad and low. They do not carry hay by railroad yet. The spoils of up-country fields. A mountain of dried herbs. I had forgotten that there

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 66, 67; Riv. 83, 84.]

ever was so much grass as they prove. And all these horses and oxen and cows, then, are still fed on the last summer's grass which has been dried! They still roam in the meads.

One would think that some people regarded character in man as the botanist regards character in flowers, who says, "Character characterem non antecellit nisi constantia," but this is well explained, and so that it becomes applicable to man, by this parallel aphorism of Linnæus, "Character non est, ut genus fiat, sed ut genus noscatur."

It is apparently Fries who is made to say of his own system — or it may be Tuckerman who says it — that "By this key, I have not yet found that any plants, manifestly and by consent of all allied, are sundered."

Tuckerman says cunningly, "If the rapt admirer of the wonders and the beauties of life and being might well come to learn of our knowledge the laws and the history of what he loves, let us remember that we have the best right to all the pleasure that he has discovered, and that we are not complete if we do not possess it all. Linnæus was as hearty a lover and admirer of nature as if he had been nothing more."

Night before last, our first rain for a long time; this afternoon, the first crust to walk on. It is pleasant to walk over the fields raised a foot or more above their summer level, and the prospect is altogether new.

Is not all music a hum more or less divine? I hear something new at every telegraph-post. I have not got out of hearing of one before I hear a new harp.

Thoughts of different dates will not cohere.

Carried a new cloak to Johnny Riordan. I found that the shanty was warmed by the simple social relations of the Irish. On Sunday they come from the town and stand in the doorway and so keep out the cold. One is not cold among his brothers and sisters. What if there is less fire on the hearth, if there is more in the heart!

These Irish are not succeeding so ill after all. The little boy goes to the primary school and proves a forward boy there, and the mother's brother, who has let himself in the village, tells me that he takes the *Flag of our Union* (if that is the paper edited by an Irishman). It is musical news to hear that Johnny does not love to be kept at home from school in deep snows.

In this winter often no apparent difference between rivers, ponds, and fields.

The French respected the Indians as a separate and independent people, and speak of them and contrast themselves with them, as the English have never done. They not only went to war with them, but they lived at home with them. There was a much less interval between them.[1]

Feb. 9. I am interested to see the seeds of the poke, about a dozen, shiny black with a white spot, somewhat like a saba bean in shape. The still full granary of the birds.

At 9 A. M. up river to Fair Haven Pond.

This is our month of the crusted snow. Was this the Indians'? I get over the half-buried fences at a stride, and the drifts slope up to the tops of the walls

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 66; Riv. 82.]

on each side. The crust is melted on the south slopes and lets me in, or where the sun has been reflected (yesterday) from a wood-side and rotted it, but the least inclination to the north is evidence of a hard surface. On the meadows and in level open fields away from the reflection of pines and oak leaves, it will generally bear.

Met Sudbury Haines on the river before the Cliffs, come a-fishing. Wearing an old coat, much patched, with many colors. He represents the Indian still. The very patches in his coat and his improvident life do so. I feel that he is as essential a part, nevertheless, of our community as the lawyer in the village. He tells me that he caught three pickerel here the other day that weighed seven pounds all together. It is the old story. The fisherman is a natural story-teller. No man's imagination plays more pranks than his, while he is tending his reels and trotting from one to another, or watching his cork in summer. He is ever waiting for the sky to fall. He has sent out a venture. He has a ticket in the lottery of fate, and who knows what it may draw? He ever expects to catch a bigger fish yet. He is the most patient and believing of men. Who else will stand so long in wet places? When the haymaker runs to shelter, he takes down his pole and bends his steps to the river, glad to have a leisure day. He is more like an inhabitant of nature. The weather concerns him. He is an observer of her phenomena.

They say that the Pasha, by some improvements in cutting down trees, has banished rain from Egypt altogether for some years past.

Men tell about the mirage to be seen in certain deserts

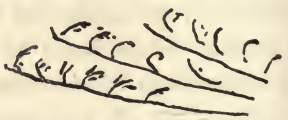
and in peculiar states of the atmosphere. The mirage is constant. The state of the atmosphere is continually varying, and, to a keen observer, objects do not twice present exactly the same appearance. If I invert my head this morning and look at the woods in the horizon, they do not look so far off and elysian-like as in the afternoon. If I am not mistaken, it is late in the afternoon that the atmosphere is in such a state that we derive the most pleasure from and are most surprised by this experiment. The prospect is thus actually a constantly varying mirage, answering to the condition of our perceptive faculties and our fluctuating imaginations. If we incline our heads never so little, the most familiar things begin to put on some new aspect. If we invert our heads completely our desecrated wood-lot appears far off, incredible, elysian, unprofaned by us. As you cannot swear through glass, no more can you swear through air, the thinnest section of it. It paints and glasses everything. When was not the air as elastic as our spirits? I cannot well conceive of greater variety than it produces by its changes from hour to hour of every day. It is a new glass placed over the picture every hour.

I did not know that the world was suffering for want of gold. The discovery of a mountain of gold would only derange the currency. I have seen a little of it. I know it is very malleable, but not so malleable as wit. A grain of it will gild a great surface, but not so much as a grain of wisdom. I do not care if the goldsmiths and jewellers find these hard times.[1]

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 464; *Misc.*, Riv. 265.]

A man goes to the end of his garden, inverts his head, and does not know his own cottage. The novelty is in us, and it is also in nature.

When I break off a twig of green-barked sassafras, as I am going through the woods now, and smell it, I am startled to find it fragrant as in summer. It is an importation of all the spices of Oriental summers into our New England winter. Very foreign to the snow and the oak leaves. I find that the wood on the Island in Fair Haven Pond has been cut off this winter, but as the young [wood] and underwood is left, I am surprised to see so much witch-hazel there, — more than anywhere else that I know of. It shall be called Witch-Hazel Island. The spray of this shrub is remarkably recurved in some instances; on one whole side of a large bush.



For the first time this many a year, I tasted there some of the sweet froth which had issued from the sap of a walnut or hickory lately cut. It is always cheering and somewhat unexpected to meet in nature with anything so agreeable to the human palate. So innocent a sweet. It reminded me of the days when I used to scrape this juice off the logs in my father's wood-pile.

Respecting lichens, perhaps the first question which the mass of men put is, "What ones are good to eat?" And the meagre answer is rock-tripe (*Umbilicaria*) and Iceland moss (*Cetraria Islandica*). They may next inquire which are the most beautiful. The most scientific will only assist to answer similar questions. How they

concern man, — the most elaborate and driest system must tell us better at last how they concern man.

Feb. 10. Now if there are any who think that I am vainglorious, that I set myself up above others and crow over their low estate, let me tell them that I could tell a pitiful story respecting myself as well as them, if my spirits held out to do it; I could encourage them with a sufficient list of failures, and could flow as humbly as the very gutters themselves; I could enumerate a list of as rank offenses as ever reached the nostrils of heaven; that I think worse of myself than they can possibly think of me, being better acquainted with the man. I put the best face on the matter. I will tell them this secret, if they will not tell it to anybody else.

Write while the heat is in you. When the farmer burns a hole in his yoke, he carries the hot iron quickly from the fire to the wood, for every moment it is less effectual to penetrate (pierce) it. It must be used instantly, or it is useless. The writer who postpones the recording of his thoughts uses an iron which has cooled to burn a hole with. He cannot inflame the minds of his audience.

We have none of those peculiar clear, vitreous, crystalline vistas in the western sky before sundown of late. There is perchance more moisture in the air. Perhaps that phenomenon does not belong to this part of the winter.

I saw yesterday on the snow on the ice, on the south side of Fair Haven Pond, some hundreds of honey-bees, dead and sunk half an inch below the crust. They had

evidently come forth from their hive (perhaps in a large hemlock on the bank close by), and had fallen on the snow chilled to death. Their bodies extended from the tree to about three rods from it toward the pond. Pratt says he would advise me to remove the dead bees, lest somebody else should be led to discover their retreat, and I may get five dollars for the swarm, and perhaps a good deal of honey.

Feb. 11. *Wednesday.* When the thermometer is down to 20° in the morning, as last month, I think of the poor dogs who have no masters. If a poor dog has no master, everybody will throw a billet of wood at him. It never rains but it pours.

It now rains, — a drizzling rain mixed with mist, which ever and anon fills the air to the height of fifteen or twenty feet. It makes what they call an old-fashioned mill privilege in the streets, *i. e.* I suppose, a privilege on a small stream good only for a part of the year.

Perhaps the best evidence of an amelioration of the climate — at least that the snows are less deep than formerly — is the snow-shoes which still lie about in so many garrets, now useless, though the population of this town has not essentially increased for seventy-five years past, and the travelling within the limits of the town accordingly not much facilitated. No man ever uses them now, yet the old men used them in their youth.

I have lived some thirty-odd years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors. They have told

me nothing, and probably can tell me nothing to the purpose. There is life, an experiment untried by me, and it does not avail me that you have tried it. If I have any valuable experience, I am sure to reflect that this my mentors said nothing about. What were mysteries to the child remain mysteries to the old man.[1]

It is a mistake to suppose that, in a country where railroads and steamboats, the printing-press and the church, and the usual evidences of what is called civilization exist, the condition of a very large body of the inhabitants cannot be as degraded as that of savages. Savages have their high and their low estate, and so have civilized nations. To know this I should not need to look further than to the shanties which everywhere line our railroads, that last improvement in civilization. But I will refer you to Ireland, which is marked as one of the white or enlightened spots on the map. Yet I have no doubt that that nation's rulers are as wise as the average of civilized rulers.[2]

Feb. 12. Living all winter with an open door for light and no visible wood-pile, the forms of old and young permanently contracted through long shrinking from cold, and their faces pinched by want. I have seen an old crone sitting bareheaded on the hillside, then in the middle of January, while it was raining and the ground was slowly thawing under her, knitting there. Their undeveloped limbs and faculties, buds that cannot expand on account of the severity of the season. There

[1] [*Walden*, p. 10; Riv. 17.]

[2] [*Walden*, pp. 38, 39; Riv. 56–58.]

is no greater squalidness in any part of the world![1] Contrast the physical condition of the Irish with that of the North American Indian, or the South Sea Islander, or any other savage race before they were degraded by contact with the civilized man.[2]

Feb. 13. Talking with Rice this afternoon about the bees which I discovered the other day, he told me something about his bee-hunting. He and Pratt go out together once or twice a year. He takes a little tin box with a little refined sugar and water about the consistency of honey, or some honey in the comb, which comes up so high only in the box as to let the lid clear a bee's back, also some little bottles of paint — red, blue, white, etc. — and a compass properly prepared to line the bees with, the sights perhaps a foot apart. Then they ride off (this is in the fall) to some extensive wood, perhaps the west side of Sudbury. They go to some buckwheat-field or a particular species of late goldenrod which especially the bees frequent at that season, and they are sure to find honey-bees enough. They catch one by putting the box under the blossoms and then covering him with the lid, at the same time cutting off the stalk of the flower. They then set down the box, and after a while raise the lid slightly to see if the bee is feeding; if so, they take off the lid, knowing that he will not fly away till he gets ready, and catch another; and so on till they get a sufficient number. Then they thrust sticks into their little paint-bot-

[1] [*Walden*, p. 58; Riv. 57.]

[2] [*Walden*, pp. 38, 39; Riv. 57, 58.]

tles, and, with these, watching their opportunity, they give the bees each a spot of a particular color on his body, — they spot him distinctly, — and then, lying about a rod off, not to scare them, and watching them carefully all the while, they wait till one has filled his sac, and prepares to depart to his hive. They are careful to note whether he has a red or a blue jacket or what color. He rises up about ten feet and then begins to circle rapidly round and round with a hum, sometimes a circle twenty feet in diameter before he has decided which way to steer, and then suddenly shoots off in a bee-line to his hive. The hunters lie flat on their backs and watch him carefully all the while. If blue-jacket steers toward the open land where there are known to be hives, they forthwith leave out of the box all the blue-jackets, and move off a little and open the box in a new place to get rid of that family. And so they work till they come to a bee, red-jacket perhaps, that steers into the wood or swamp or in a direction to suit them. They take the point of compass exactly, and wait perhaps till red-jacket comes back, that they may ascertain his course more exactly, and also judge by the time it has taken for him to go and return, using their watches, how far off the nest is, though sometimes they are disappointed in their calculations, for it may take the [bee] more or less time to crawl into its nest, depending on its position in the tree. By the third journey he will commonly bring some of his companions. Our hunters then move forward a piece, from time to time letting out a bee to make sure of their course. After the bees have gone and come once, they generally

steer straight to their nest at once without circling round first. Sometimes the hunters, having observed this course carefully on the compass, go round a quarter of a circle and, letting out another bee, observe the course from that point, knowing that where these two lines intersect must be the nest. Rice thinks that a bee-line does not vary more than fifteen or twenty feet from a straight one in going half a mile. They frequently trace the bees thus to their hives more than a mile.

He said that the last time he went out the wind was so strong that the bees made some leeway just as a bullet will, and he could not get the exact course to their hives. He has a hive of bees over in Sudbury, and he every year sows some buckwheat for them. He has visited this buckwheat when in blossom when there was more than one bee to every six inches square, and out of curiosity has caught a number of the bees and, letting them out successively, has calculated by the several courses they took whose hives they came from in almost every instance, though some had come more than two miles and others belonged to his own hive close by.

He has seen a dozen hogsheads of honey from South America on the wharf at Boston. Says they manufacture honey now from maple syrup, which you cannot tell from bee honey, taking care to throw some dead bees and bees' wings and a little honeycomb into it.

He was repaid if he found the nest, even if he did not get any honey. I am glad to know that there are such grown children left. He says the mountain honeysuckle (columbine) has a good deal of honey at the

bottom of the flower which the bee cannot get at in the usual way; it therefore gnaws a hole in it from the outside.

The actual bee-hunter and pigeon-catcher is familiar with facts in the natural history of bees and pigeons which Huber and even Audubon are totally ignorant of. I love best the unscientific man's knowledge; there is so much more humanity in it. It is connected with true *sports*.

9 A. M. — To Conantum.

The rain has diminished the snow and hardened the crust, and made bare ground in many places. A yellow water, a foot or two deep, covers the ice on the meadows, but is not frozen quite hard enough to bear. As the river swells, the ice cracks along both sides over the edge of its channel, often defined by willows, and that part over the river rises with the water, but that over the meadow is held down apparently by the grass and bushes (and moreover feels the force of the freshet less), and is, accordingly, covered with water.

I sat by the little brook in Conant's meadow, where it falls over an oak rail between some boards which partially dam it, — eight or nine inches, — the bubbles on the surface making a coarse foam, the surface of which I perceive has frozen in the night, forming an irregular shell-like covering which is now partly worn away at top. These bubbles which so closely push up and crowd one another, each making haste to expand and burst (forming coarse frothy heaps), impinging on each other, remind me of the cells of honeycomb,

as if they inclined to take the same hexagonal form, — four-sided, five-sided, but the most perfect, methinks, six-sided, — but it is difficult to count them, they are so restless and burst so soon. In one place this froth had been frozen into the form of little hollow towers larger at top than at bottom, six inches high, and the bubbles were now incessantly rising through and bursting at their top, — overflowing with bubbles. I saw the ruined shells of many similar towers that had been washed down the stream.

Air being carried down by the force of this little fall and mixed with the water, deeper bubbles were formed, which rose up further down and were flattened against the transparent ice, through which they appeared like coins of all sizes from a pin-head to a dollar, poured out of a miser's pot, hesitating at first which way to troop, seeming sometimes to be detained by some inequality in the ice which they so closely hugged. The coin-like bubbles of the brook.

I traced this rill further up, to where it comes under the road, and heard its rumbling like a mill privilege from afar, but it was quite bridged over there with snow; but here and there the foam was frothing up through a hole in the snow like a little geyser, and in some places it was frozen in the form of beehives eighteen inches high and a foot wide, the most delicate flocculent masses which could not be handled, regularly formed, layer on layer, sometimes of a downy white, sometimes tinged with a delicate fawn-color, in which you could detect a slight trembling, showing that the geyser was still at work in its core. Nature handled

the froth more delicately than the spinner's machinery his roping.

Color, which is the poet's wealth, is so expensive that most take to mere outline or pencil sketches and become men of science.

Feb. 14. But this points to a distinction between the civilized man and the savage; and, no doubt, they have designs on us in making (of the life of a civilized people) an institution in which the life of the individual is to a great extent absorbed, in order, perchance, to preserve and perfect the race. But I wish to show at what a sacrifice this advantage is at present obtained, and to suggest that we may possibly so live as to secure all the advantage without suffering any of the disadvantage. What mean ye by saying that the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?

"As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.

"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."[1]

3 P. M. — Walden road to pond, thence to Cliffs.

The slight snow of last night, lodging on the limbs of the oaks, has given them the wintry and cobwebbed appearance which distinguishes them so plainly from the pines. They are great cladonias, perchance.

Met Joshua Brown returning from the pond (Walden)

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 34, 35; Riv. 52, 53.]

without having caught a fish. Has had no luck there this winter, he thinks because of the woodcutters' falling trees on to the ice. He, too, tells how many weighed a certain number of pounds. Four pounds and three quarters is the heaviest he ever caught, but the pickerel that ran off with his reel (before he got to it), which he did not see, he set at ten pounds.

I noticed a white pine, rotten within, near the pond, — or, rather, eaten out, honeycombed, by the ants, as I think, — and I was struck by the regular cellular character of the cavities they had made, separated by thin partitions, each cell about an inch and a half long, reminding me of Chinese puzzles carved in wood.

The seeds or seed-vessels of wintergreen are conspicuous above the snow.

The winter has had its seasons somewhat in this order, as near as I now remember: First there were a few glowing sunsets after raw and blustering days, setting the pines and oaks on fire with their blaze, when the summer and fall had set, — the afterglow of the year. Then, if I remember, came the snows, and true winter began, the snow growing gradually deeper and the cold more intense. I think it was before the first thaw, which this winter came before the end of December, that the main attraction in my afternoon walks (at any rate when the days were shortest and the cold most intense) was the western sky at and before sunset, when, through the vistas there between the clouds, you saw a singularly crystalline, vitreous sky, which perhaps is not seen at any other season of the year, at least not in such perfection. I will see if

we have any more this winter. Well, then there was the thaw, January thaw, which this year came in December, for it is the first thaw after long-continued cold weather and snow, when we have fairly forgotten summer. This winter was remarkable for the long continuance of severe cold weather after it had once set in. Latterly we have had, *i. e.* within a week, crusted snow, made by thaw and rain, but now I do not see the crystalline sky.

In the January thaw I should have mentioned the sand foliage in the Cut.

Now we have the swollen river, and yellow water over the meadow ice to some extent. Other epochs I might find described in my Journal.

At the Cliffs, the rocks are in some places covered with ice; and the least inclination beyond a perpendicular in their faces is betrayed by the formation of icicles at once, which hang perpendicularly, like organ pipes, in front of the rock. They are now conducting downward the melting ice and snow, which drips from their points with a slight clinking and lapsing sound, but when the sun has set will freeze there and add to the icicles' length. Where the icicles have reached the ground and are like thick pillars, they have a sort of annular appearance, somewhat like the successive swells on the legs of tables and on bed-posts. There is perhaps a harmony between the turner's taste and the law of nature in this instance. The shadow of the water flowing or pulsating behind this transparent icy crust or these stalactites in the sun imparts a semblance of life to the whole.

The traveller's is so apt to be a progress more or less rapid toward his home (I have read many a voyage round the world more than half of which, certainly, was taken up with the return voyage; he no sooner is out of sight of his native hills than he begins to tell us how he got home again) that I wonder he did not stay at home in the first place.

The laws of nature always furnish us with the best excuse for going and coming. If we do not go now, we shall find our fire out.

I hate that my motive for visiting a friend should be that I want society; that it should lie in my poverty and weakness, and not in his and my riches and strength. His friendship should make me strong enough to do without him.

Feb. 15. Perhaps I am descended from that Northman named "Thorer the Dog-footed." Thorer Hund — "he was the most powerful man in the North" — to judge from his name belonged to the same family. Thorer is one of the most, if not the most, common name in the chronicles of the Northmen.

Feb. 16. Laing says that "the Heimskringla has been hardly used by the learned men of the period in which it was first published. It appeared first in the literary world in 1697, frozen into the Latin of the Swedish antiquary, Peringskiold."

Snorro Sturleson says, "From Thor's name comes Thorer, also Thorarinn." Again: "Earl Rognvald was King Harald's dearest friend, and the king had the

greatest regard for him. He was married to Hilda, a daughter of Rolf Naefia, and their sons were Rolf and Thorer. . . . Rolf became a great viking, and was of so stout a growth that no horse could carry him, and wheresoever he went he must go on foot; and therefore he was called Gange-Rolf." (Laing says in a note, what Sturleson also tells in the text, Gange-Rolf, Rolf Ganger, Rolf the Walker, was the conqueror of Normandy.) "Gange-Rolf's son was William, father to Richard, and grandfather to another Richard, who was the father of Richard Longspear, and grandfather of William the Bastard, from whom all the following English kings are descended."

King Harald "set Earl Rognvald's son Thorer over Möre, and gave him his daughter Alof in marriage. Thorer, called the Silent, got the same territory his father Rognvald had possessed." His brother Einar, going into battle to take vengeance on his father's murderers, sang a kind of reproach against his brothers Rollang and Rolf for their slowness and concludes, —

> "And silent Thorer sits and dreams
> At home, beside the mead-bowl's streams."

Of himself it is related that he cut a spread eagle on the back of his enemy Halfdan.

So it seems that from one branch of the family were descended the kings of England, and from the other myself.

Down Turnpike.

It is interesting to meet an ox with handsomely spreading horns. There is a great variety of sizes and forms, though one horn commonly matches the other. I am

willing to turn out for those that spread their branches wide. Large and spreading horns methinks indicate a certain vegetable force and naturalization in the wearer; it softens and eases off the distinction between the animal and vegetable, the unhorned animals and the trees. I should say that the horned animals approached nearer to the vegetable. The deer that run in the woods, as the moose for instance, carry perfect trees on their heads. The French call them *bois*. No wonder there are fables of centaurs and the like. No wonder there is a story of a hunter who, when his bullets failed, fired cherry-stones into the heads of his game and so trees sprouted out of them, and the hunter refreshed himself with the cherries. It is a perfect piece of mythology which belongs to these days. Oxen, which are de-animalized to some extent, approach nearer to the vegetable, perchance, than bulls and cows, and hence their bulky bodies and large and spreading horns. Nothing more natural than that the deer should appear with a tree growing out of his head. Thus is the animal allied to the vegetable kingdom and passes into it by insensible degrees. These appendages are indispensable to the beauty of the animal, as appears from the great calf look of a cow without horns, or a "bunter."

Man's relation to oxen is the same that it was in primitive ages. It is equally primitive. He has got no nearer to them. If his ox breaks through the ice, he knows no better how to get him out than if it had never happened. The helpless unwieldiness of the oxen is remarkable. I was told yesterday that when a man had got his ox out of Bateman's Pond, the latter gave a

spring, and, coming down, his hind legs slipped and spread apart on the ice, and he was split up so that he had to be killed.

This afternoon there is a clear, bright air, which, though cold and windy, I love to inhale. I see mother-o'-pearl tints, and I am not sure but this will be such a sunset as we had a month ago. The sky is a much fairer and [more] undimmed blue than usual.

The surface of the snow which fell last night is coarse like bran, with shining flakes. I see the steam-like snow-dust curling up and careering along over the fields. As I walk the bleak Walden road, it blows up over the highest drifts in the west, lit by the westering sun like the spray on a beach before the northwest wind. This drifting snow-dust has formed long, flattish drifts a few feet wide by some rods [long], with a rounded, swelling surface where it has lodged. The intermediate spaces, a rod or two wide, being swept clean and left uneven and naked, over these rollers it sweeps on to fill the road.

By the artificial system we learn the names of plants, by the natural their relations to one another; but still it remains to learn their relation to man. The poet does more for us in this department.

Linnæus says *elementa* are simple, *naturalia* composed by divine art. And these two embrace all things on earth. Physics treats of the properties of *elementa*, natural science of *naturalia*.

Feb. 17. Perhaps the peculiarity of those western vistas was partly owing to the shortness of the days,

when we naturally look to the heavens and make the most of the little light, when we live an arctic life, when the woodchopper's axe reminds us of twilight at 3 o'clock P. M., when the morning and the evening literally make the whole day, when I travelled, as it were, between the portals of the night, and the path was narrow as well as blocked with snow. Then, too, the sun has the last opportunity to fill the air with vapor.

I see on the Walden road that the wind through the wall is cutting *through* the drifts, leaving a portion adhering to the stones.

It is hard for the traveller when, in a cold and blustering day, the sun and wind come from the same side. To-day the wind is northwest, or west by north, and the sun from the southwest.

The apothecium of lichens appears to be a fungus, — all fruit.

I saw Patrick Riordan carrying home an armful of fagots from the woods to his shanty, on his shoulder. How much more interesting an event is that man's supper who has just been forth in the snow to hunt, or perchance to steal, the fuel to cook it with! His bread and meat must be sweet.[1]

It was something to hear that the women of Waltham used the *Parmelia saxatilis* (?) in dyeing.

If you would read books on botany, go to the fathers of the science. Read Linnæus at once, and come down from him as far as you please. I lost much time reading the florists. It is remarkable how little the mass of those

[1] [*Walden*, p. 275; Riv. 386.]

interested in botany are acquainted with Linnæus. His "Philosophia Botanica," which Rousseau, Sprengel, and others praised so highly, — I doubt if it has ever been translated into English. It is simpler, more easy to understand, and more comprehensive, than any of the hundred manuals to which it has given birth. A few pages of cuts representing the different parts of plants, with the botanical names attached, is worth whole volumes of explanation.

According to Linnæus's classification, I come under the head of the *Miscellaneous* Botanophilists, — "Botanophili sunt, qui varia de vegetabilibus tradiderunt, licet ea non proprie de scientiam Botanicam spectant," — either one of the *Biologi* (*Panegyrica plerumque exclamarunt*) or *Poetæ*.

Feb. 18. When Eystein the Bad ravaged the land of Drontheim, "he then offered the people either his slave Thorer Faxe, or his dog, whose name was Sauer, to be their king. They preferred the dog, as they thought they would sooner get rid of him. Now the dog was, by witchcraft, gifted with three men's wisdom; and when he barked, he spoke one word and barked two. A collar and chain of gold and silver were made for him, and his courtiers carried him in their hands when the weather or ways were foul. A throne was erected for him, and he sat upon a high place, as kings are used to sit. . . . It is told that the occasion of his death was that the wolves one day broke into his fold, and his courtiers stirred him up to defend his cattle; but when he ran down from his mound, and attacked the wolves, they tore him to

pieces." Now I think if he had spoken two words and barked only one, he would have been wiser still and never fallen into the clutches of the wolves.

By some traits in the saga concerning King Hakon the Good, I am reminded of the concessions which some politicians and religionists, who are all things to all men, make. Hakon was unpopular on account of his attempts to spread Christianity, and to conciliate his subjects he drank out of the horn which had been blessed in Odin's name at a festival of sacrifice, but as he drank he made the sign of the cross over it. And one of his earls told the people that he was making the sign of Thor's hammer over it. "On this," it is said, "there was quietness for the evening. The next day, when the people sat down to table, the bonders pressed the king strongly to eat of horse flesh [this was an evidence of paganism];[1] and as he would on no account do so, they wanted him to drink of the soup; and as he would not do this, they insisted he should at least taste the gravy; and on his refusal they were going to lay hands on him. Earl Sigurd came and made peace among them, by asking the king to hold his mouth over the handle of the kettle, upon which the fat smoke of the boiled horse flesh had settled itself; and the king first laid a linen cloth over the handle, and then gaped over it, and returned to the throne; but neither party was satisfied with this." On another day the Earl "brought it so far that the king took some bits of horse liver, and emptied all the goblets the bonders filled for him." This Hakon had a daughter *Thora*.

[1] [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

Thorer Klakke was one "who had been long on Viking expeditions."

Thorer Hiort "was quicker on foot than any man."

I have a commonplace-book for facts and another for poetry, but I find it difficult always to preserve the vague distinction which I had in my mind, for the most interesting and beautiful facts are so much the more poetry and that is their success. They are *translated* from earth to heaven. I see that if my facts were sufficiently vital and significant, — perhaps transmuted more into the substance of the human mind, — I should need but one book of poetry to contain them all.

P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill.

One discovery in meteorology, one significant observation, is a good deal. I am grateful to the man who introduces order among the clouds. Yet I look up into the heavens so fancy free, I am almost glad not to know any law for the winds.

I find the partridges among the fallen pine-tops on Fair Haven these afternoons, an hour before sundown, ready to commence budding in the neighboring orchard.

The mosses on the rocks look green where the snow has melted. This must be one of the spring signs, when spring comes.

It is impossible for the same person to see things from the poet's point of view and that of the man of science. The poet's second love may be science, not his first, — when use has worn off the bloom. I realize that men may be born to a condition of mind at which

others arrive in middle age by the decay of their poetic faculties.

Feb. 19. The sky appears broader now than it did. The day has opened its eyelids wider. The lengthening of the days, commenced a good while ago, is a kind of forerunner of the spring. Of course it is then that the ameliorating cause begins to work.

To White Pond.

Considering the melon-rind arrangement of the clouds, by an ocular illusion the bars appearing to approach each other in the east and west horizons, I am prompted to ask whether the melons will not be found to lie in this direction oftenest.

The strains from my muse are as rare nowadays, or of late years, as the notes of birds in the winter, — the faintest occasional tinkling sound, and mostly of the woodpecker kind or the harsh jay or crow. It never melts into a song. Only the *day-day-day* of an inquisitive titmouse.

Everywhere snow, gathered into sloping drifts about the walls and fences, and, beneath the snow, the frozen ground, and men are compelled to deposit the summer's provision in burrows in the earth like the ground squirrel. Many creatures, daunted by the prospect, migrated in the fall, but man remains and walks over the frozen snow-crust and over the stiffened rivers and ponds, and draws now upon his summer stores. Life is reduced to its lowest terms. There is no home for you now, in this freezing wind, but in that shelter which you prepared in the summer. You steer straight across

the fields to that in season. I can with difficulty tell when I am over the river. There is a similar crust over my heart. Where I rambled in the summer and gathered flowers and rested on the grass by the brook-side in the shade, now no grass nor flowers, no brook nor shade, but cold, unvaried snow, stretching mile after mile, and no place to sit.

Look at White Pond, that crystal drop that was, in which the umbrageous shore was reflected, and schools of fabulous perch and shiners rose to the surface, and with difficulty you made your way along the pebbly shore in a summer afternoon to the bathing-place. Now you stalk rapidly across where it was, muffled in your cloak, over a more level snow-field than usual, furrowed by the wind, its finny inhabitants and its pebbly shore all hidden and forgotten, and you would shudder at the thought of wetting your feet in it.

Returning across the river just as the sun was setting behind the Hollowell place, the ice eastward of me a few rods, where the snow was blown off, was as green as bottle glass, seen at the right angle, though all around, above and below, was one unvaried white, — a vitreous glass green. Just as I have seen the river green in a winter morning. This phenomenon is to be put with the blue in the crevices of the snow.

So, likewise, give me leave, or require me, to mend my work, and I will chip down the vessel on both sides to a level with the notches which I have made.

A fine display of the northern lights after 10 P. M., flashing up from all parts of the horizon to the zenith, where there was a kind of core formed, stretching south-

southeast [and] north-northwest, surrounded by what looked like a permanent white cloud, which, however, was very variable in its form. The light flashes or trembles upward, as if it were the light of the sun reflected from a frozen mist which undulated in the wind in the upper atmosphere.

Feb. 20. Erling had a son Thorer. It is said of the former that "both winter and summer it was the custom in his house to drink at the mid-day meal according to a measure, but at the night meal there was no measure in drinking."

Kings are not they who go abroad to conquer kingdoms, but who stay at home and mind their business, proving first their ability to govern their families and themselves. "King Sigurd Syr was standing in his corn-field when the messengers came to him. . . . He had many people on his farm. Some were then shearing corn, some bound it together, some drove it to the building, some unloaded it and put it in stack or barn; but the king and two men with him went sometimes into the field, sometimes to the place where the corn was put into the barn." He "attended carefully to his cattle and husbandry, and managed his housekeeping himself. He was nowise given to pomp and was rather taciturn. But he was a man of the best understanding in Norway." After hearing the messengers, he replied: "The news ye bring me is weighty, and ye bring it forward in great heat. Already before now Aasta has been taken up much with people who were not so near to her; and I see she is still of the same disposition.

She takes this up with great warmth; but can she lead her son out of the business with the same splendor she is leading him into it?"

Fate will go all lengths to aid her protégés. When the Swedish king and Olaf, king of Norway, threw lots for the possession of a farm, "the Swedish king threw two sixes, and said King Olaf need scarcely throw. He replied, while shaking the dice in his hand, 'Although there be two sixes on the dice, it would be easy, sire, for God Almighty to let them turn up in my favor.' Then he threw, and had sixes also. Now the Swedish king threw again, and had again two sixes. Olaf, king of Norway, then threw, and had six upon one dice, and the other split in two, so as to make seven eyes in all upon it; and the farm was adjudged to the king of Norway."

There was a Thorer Sel, who "was a man of low birth, but had swung himself up in the world as an active man."

There was a Northman named "Rane Thin-nose."

There is a long story about Thorer Hund's expedition to Biarmeland.

"*Ludr*, the lure," says Laing in note, "is a long tube or roll of birch-bark used as a horn by the herdboys in the mountains of Norway."

There was a "Thorer the Low."

There was a giant of a man named Ganka-Thorer and his brother, who joined King Olaf's army. The king inquired if they were Christians.

"Ganka-Thorer replies, that he is neither Christian nor heathen. 'I and my comrades have no faith but on

ourselves, our strength, and the luck of victory; and with this faith we slip through sufficiently well.'

"The king replies, 'A great pity it is that such brave slaughtering fellows do not believe in Christ their Creator.'

"Thorer replies, 'Is there any Christian man, king, in thy following, who stands so high in the air as we two brothers?'"

In King Olaf's last battle, he "hewed at Thorer Hund, and struck him across the shoulders; but the sword would not cut, and it was as if dust flew from his reindeer-skin coat." There are some verses about it. But Thorer, having had a hand in the death of the king, left the country. "He went all the way to Jerusalem, and many people say he never came back."

Poeta nascitur non fit, but under what conditions is the poet born? Perchance there is such a thing as a perpetual propagation or reproduction of the human without any recreation, as all botanists assert respecting plants, and as Meyer in particular concerning lichens, who says that "the pulverulent matter of Lichens is that which is subject to this kind of indefinite propagation, while the sporules lying in the shields are the only part that will really multiply the species."

Every gardener practices budding and grafting, but only Van Mons and his equals cultivate seedlings and produce new and valuable varieties. The genius is a seedling, often precocious or made to bear fruit early, as Van Mons treated his pears. The common man is the Baldwin, propagated by mere offshoots or repetitions of the parent stock. At least, if all men are to be

regarded as seedlings, the greater part are exceedingly like the parent stock.

The slope from the last generation to this seems steeper than any part of history. I hear with surprise this afternoon that the ox-wagon was rarely seen fifty years ago; they used the ox-cart here almost exclusively then, even to team wood to Boston.

The law requires wood to be four feet long from the middle of the carf to the middle of the carf, yet the honest deacon and farmer directs his hired men to cut his wood "four feet a little scant." He does it as naturally as he breathes.

We love to see nature clad, whether in earth or a human body. Nobody likes to set his house under that part of the hill where the sod is broken and the sand is flowing.

P. M. — To Flint's Pond.

The last two or three days have been *among* the coldest in the winter, though not so cold as a few weeks ago. I notice, in the low ground covered with bushes near Flint's Pond, many little rabbit-paths in the snow, where they have travelled in each other's tracks, or many times back and forth, six inches wide. This, too, is probably their summer habit. The rock by the pond is remarkable for its umbilicaria (?).

I saw a mole (?) run along under the bank by the edge of the pond, but it was only by watching long and sharply that I glimpsed him now and then, he ran so close to the ground and under rather than over anything, as roots and beds of leaves and twigs, and yet

without making any noise. No wonder that we so rarely see these animals, though their tracks are so common. I have been astonished to observe before, after holding them in my hand, how quickly they will bury themselves and glide along just beneath the surface, whatever it may be composed of, — grass or leaves or twigs or earth or snow. So some men are sly and subterranean in their ways, and skulk, though often they raise a mound of earth or snow above their backs, which betrays rather than conceals them. For privacy they prefer to travel in a gallery like the mole, though it sometimes happens that it is arched above the ground when they think themselves deep in the sod. The mole goes behind and beneath, rather than before and above.

Feb. 21. "As fat as a hen in the forehead," — a saying which I heard my father use this morning.

Feb. 22. Went to Plymouth to lecture or preach all day.

Bœomyces roseus (βαιός, small, and μύκης, a fungus).

Saw in Plymouth, near Billington Sea, the *Prinos glaber*, or evergreen winterberry. It must be the same with the black-berried bush behind Provincetown.

A mild, misty day. The red (?) oaks about Billington Sea fringed with usneas, which in this damp air appear in perfection. The trunks and main stems of the trees have, as it were, suddenly leaved out in the winter, — a very lively light green, — and these ringlets and ends of usnea are so expanded and puffed out

with light and life, with their reddish or rosaceous fruit, it is a true lichen day. They take the place of leaves in the winter. The clusters dripping with moisture, expanded as it were by electricity, sometimes completely investing the stem of the tree.

I understood that there were two only of the sixth generation from the Pilgrims still alive (in Plymouth?).

Every man will take such views as he can afford to take. Views one would think were the most expensive guests to entertain. I perceive that the reason my neighbor cannot entertain certain views is the narrow limit within which he is obliged to live, on account of the smallness of his means. His instinct tells him that it will not do to relax his hold here and take hold where he cannot keep hold.

Feb. 24. P. M. — Railroad causeway.

I am reminded of spring by the quality of the air. The cock-crowing and even the telegraph harp prophesy it, though the ground is for the most part covered with snow. It is a natural resurrection, an experience of immortality. Observe the poplar's swollen buds and the brightness of the willow's bark.[1]

The telegraph harp reminds me of Anacreon. That is the glory of Greece, that we are reminded of her only when in our best estate, our elysian days, when our senses are young and healthy again. I could find a name for every strain or intonation of the harp from one or other of the Grecian bards. I often hear Mimnermus, often Menander.

[1] Probably not.

I am too late by a day or two for the sand foliage on the east side of the Deep Cut. It is glorious to see the soil again, here where a shovel, perchance, will enter it and find no frost. The frost is partly come out of this bank, and it is become dry again in the sun.

The very sound of men's work reminds, advertises, me of the coming of spring. As I now hear at a distance the sound of the laborer's sledge on the rails.

The *empressement* of a little dog when he starts any wild thing in the woods! The woods ring with his barking as if the tragedy of Actæon were being acted over again.

Talked with two men and a boy fishing on Fair Haven, just before sunset. (Heard the dog bark in Baker's wood as I came down the brook.) They had caught a fine parcel of pickerel and perch. The perch especially were full of spawn. The boy had caught a large bream which had risen to the surface, in his hands. They had none of them ever seen one before in the winter, though they sometimes catch chivins. They had also kicked to death a muskrat that was crossing the southwest end of the pond on the snow. They told me of two otters being killed in Sudbury this winter, beside some coons near here.

As we grow older, is it not ominous that we have more to write about evening, less about morning? We must associate more with the early hours.

Feb. 26. The east side of Deep Cut nearly dry; sand has ceased flowing; west side just beginning. Now

begin to see the *Cladonia rangiferina* ("reindeer moss") in the dry pastures. Observed for the first time on and about Bear Hill in Lincoln the *Parmelia conspersa* (?), "greenish straw-colored," and what I suppose is *P. saxatilis*, "glaucous-cinerescent." The *P. conspersa* is a very handsome and memorable lichen, which every child has admired. I love to find it where the rocks will split into their laminæ so that I can easily carry away a specimen. The low hills in the northeast beyond Bedford, seen from Bear Hill about 4.30 P. M., were remarkably dark blue, much more blue than the mountains in the northwest. The sky was in great part concealed by white clouds. Had this blue the same cause with the blue in the crevices of the snow?

Returned across Flint's Pond and the wood-lot, where some Irishman must have tried his first experiment in chopping, his first winter, where the trees were hacked off two feet from the ground, as if with a hatchet, — standing on every side of the tree by turns, and crossing the carf a hundred ways. The owner can commonly tell when an Irishman has trespassed on his wood-lot.

We are told to-day that civilization is making rapid progress; the tendency is ever upward; substantial justice is done even by human courts; you may trust the good intentions of mankind. We read to-morrow in the newspapers that the French nation is on the eve of going to war with England to give employment to her army. What is the influence of men of principle, or how numerous are they? How many moral teachers has society? This Russian war is popular. Of course

so many as she has will resist her. How many resist her? How many have I heard speak with warning voice? utter wise warnings? The preacher's standard of morality is no higher than that of his audience. He studies to conciliate his hearers and never to offend them. Does the threatened war between France and England evince any more enlightenment than a war between two savage tribes, as the Iroquois and the Hurons? Is it founded in better reason?

Feb. 27. The mosses now are in fruit — or have sent up their filaments with calyptræ.

The main river is not yet open but in very few places, but the North Branch, which is so much more rapid, is open near Tarbell's and Harrington's, where I walked to-day, and, flowing with full tide bordered with ice on either side, sparkles in the clear, cool air, — a silvery sparkle as from a stream that would not soil the sky.

Half the ground is covered with snow. It is a moderately cool and pleasant day near the end of winter. We have almost completely forgotten summer. This restless and now swollen stream has burst its icy fetters, and as I stand looking up it westward for half a mile, where it winds slightly under a high bank, its surface is lit up here and there with a fine-grained silvery sparkle which makes the river appear something celestial, — more than a terrestrial river, — which might have suggested that which surrounded the shield in Homer. If rivers come out of their icy prison thus bright and immortal, shall not I too resume my spring life with joy

and hope? Have I no hopes to sparkle on the surface of life's current?

It is worth the while to have our faith revived by seeing where a river swells and eddies about a half-buried rock, — dimples on the surface of water.

This has truly been a month of crusted snow. Now the snow-patches, which partially melt one part of the day or week, freeze at another, so that the walker traverses them with tolerable ease.

Crossed the river on ice.

To-night a circle round the moon. The buds of the aspen show a part of their down or silky catkins (?). The bank by Tarbell's road is a grand place for *Cladonia Scyphiferæ*[1] of various kinds.

Feb. 28. To-day it snows again, covering the ground.

To get the value of the storm we must be out a long time and travel far in it, so that it may fairly penetrate our skin, and we be as it were turned inside out to it, and there be no part in us but is wet or weather-beaten, — so that we become storm men instead of fair-weather men. Some men speak of having been wetted to the skin once as a memorable event in their lives, which, notwithstanding the croakers, they survived.

The snow is finally turned to a drenching rain.

Feb. 29. High winds last night and this morning, which made some tremble for their roofs and kept them awake half the night. Before which it cleared off in the night. The house shakes, and the beds and tables

[1] [The *Scyphiferæ* form a subdivision of the genus *Cladonia*.]

rock. This morning is clear and cold. Our neighbor's chimney was blown down last night.

Simplicity is the law of nature for men as well as for flowers. When the tapestry (corolla) of the nuptial bed (calyx) is excessive, luxuriant, it is unproductive. Linnæus says, "Luxuriant flowers are none natural but all monsters," and so for the most part abortive, and when *proliferous* "they but increase the monstrous deformity." "Luxurians flos tegmenta fructificationis ita multiplicat, ut essentiales equidem partes destruantur." "Oritur luxurians flos plerumque ab alimento luxuriante."

Such a flower has no true progeny and can only be *reproduced* by the humble mode of cuttings from its stem or roots. "Anthophilorum et Hortulanorum deliciæ sunt flores pleni," not of nature. The fertile flowers are single, not double.

P. M. — To Pine Hill across Walden.

The high wind takes off the oak leaves. I see them scrambling up the slopes of the Deep Cut, hurry-scurry over the slippery snow-crust, like a flock of squirrels. The ice on Walden is of a dull white as I look directly down on it, but not half a dozen rods distant on every side it is a light-blue color.

For the past month there has been more sea-room in the day, without so great danger of running aground on one of those two promontories that make it arduous to navigate the winter day, the morning or the evening. It is a narrow pass, and you must go through with the tide. Might not some of my pages be called "The Short Days of Winter"?

From Pine Hill, looking westward, I see the snow-crust shine in the sun as far as the eye can reach, — snow which fell but yesterday morning. Then, before night, came the rain; then, in the night, the freezing northwest wind, and where day before yesterday was half the ground bare, is this sheeny snow-crust to-day.

VI

MARCH, 1852

(ÆT. 34)

March 1. Linnæus, speaking of the necessity of precise and adequate terms in any science, after naming some which he invented for botany, says, "Termini praeservarunt Anatomiam, Mathesin, Chemiam, ab idiotis; Medicinam autem eorum defectus conculcavit." (Terms (well defined) have preserved anatomy, mathematics, and chemistry from idiots; but the want of them has ruined medicine.) But I should say that men generally were not enough interested in the first-mentioned sciences to meddle with and degrade them. There is no interested motive to induce them to listen to the quack in mathematics, as they have to attend to the quack in medicine; yet chemistry has been converted into alchemy, and astronomy into astrology.

However, I can see that there is a certain advantage in these hard and precise terms, such as the lichenist uses, for instance. No one masters them so as to use them in writing on the subject without being far better informed than the rabble about it. New books are not written on chemistry or cryptogamia of as little worth comparatively as are written on the *spiritual* phenomena of the day. No man writes on lichens, using the terms of the science intelligibly, without having something to say, but every one thinks himself competent to write

on the relation of the soul to the body, as if that were a *phænogamous* subject.

After having read various books on various subjects for some months, I take up a report on Farms by a committee of Middlesex Husbandmen, and read of the number of acres of bog that some farmer has redeemed, and the number of rods of stone wall that he has built, and the number of tons of hay he now cuts, or of bushels of corn or potatoes he raises there, and I feel as if I had got my foot down on to the solid and sunny earth, the basis of all philosophy, and poetry, and religion even. I have faith that the man who redeemed some acres of land the past summer redeemed also some parts of his character. I shall not expect to find him ever in the almshouse or the prison. He is, in fact, so far on his way to heaven. When he took the farm there was not a grafted tree on it, and now he realizes something handsome from the sale of fruit. These, in the absence of other facts, are evidence of a certain moral worth.

March 2. If the sciences are protected from being carried by assault by the mob, by a palisade or *chevaux-de-frise* of technical terms, so also the learned man may sometimes ensconce himself and conceal his little true knowledge behind hard names. Perhaps the value of any statement may be measured by its susceptibility to be expressed in popular language. The greatest discoveries can be reported in the newspapers. I thought it was a great advantage both to speakers and hearers when, at the meetings of scientific gentlemen at the

Marlborough Chapel, the representatives of all departments of science were required to speak intelligibly to those of other departments, therefore dispensing with the most peculiarly technical terms. A man may be permitted to state a very meagre truth to a fellow-student, using technical terms, but when he stands up before the mass of men, he must have some distinct and important truth to communicate; and the most important it will always be the most easy to communicate to the vulgar.

If anybody thinks a thought, how sure we are to hear of it! Though it be only a half-thought or half a delusion, it gets into the newspapers, and all the country rings with it. But how much clearing of land and plowing and planting and building of stone wall is done every summer without being reported in the newspapers or in literature! Agricultural literature is not as extensive as the fields, and the farmer's almanac is never a big book. And yet I think that the history (or poetry) of one farm from a state of nature to the highest state of cultivation comes nearer to being the true subject of a modern epic than the siege of Jerusalem or any such paltry and ridiculous resource to which some have thought men reduced. Was it Coleridge? The Works and Days of Hesiod, the Eclogues and Georgics of Virgil, are but leaves out of that epic.

The turning a swamp into a garden, though the poet may not think it an improvement, is at any rate an enterprise interesting to all men.

A wealthy farmer who has money to let was here yesterday, who said that fourteen years ago a man came

to him to hire two hundred dollars for thirty days. He told him that he should have it if he would give proper security, but the other, thinking it exorbitant to require security for so short a term, went away. But he soon returned and gave the security. "And," said the farmer, "he has punctually paid me twelve dollars a year ever since. I have never said a word to him about the principle."

It will soon be forgotten, in these days of stoves, that we used to roast potatoes in the ashes, after the Indian fashion of cooking.

The farmer increases the extent of the habitable earth. He makes soil. That is an honorable occupation.

March 3. *Wednesday.* Moore's larch trees beyond Sleepy Hollow cut this winter. They were much decayed. The woodpeckers had stripped many of bark in pursuit of grubs. When the woodpeckers visit your woods in great numbers, you may suspect that it is time to cut them. The chopper does not complain of cutting the larch, but when he comes to the splitting there 's the rub. The grain runs almost round a four-foot stick sometimes. They make good posts.

Are those poplars whose buds I have seen so much expanded for a week or more a new species to me? The river poplar?[1]

March 4. The gold-digger in the ravines of the mountains is as much a gambler as his fellow in the saloons of San Francisco. What difference does it

[1] No.

make whether you shake dirt or shake dice? If you win, society is the loser. The gold-digger is the enemy of the honest laborer, whatever checks and compensations a kind fate (?) has provided. The humblest thinker who has been to the mines sees and says that gold-digging is of the character of a lottery, that the reward is not proportionate to the labor, that the gold has not the same look, is not the same thing, with the wages of honest toil; but he practically forgets what he has seen, for he has seen only the fact, not the principle. He looks out for "the main chance" still; he buys a ticket in another lottery, nevertheless, where the fact is not so obvious. It is remarkable that among all the teachers and preachers there are so few moral teachers. I find the prophets and preachers employed in excusing the ways of men. My most reverend seniors — doctors, deacons, and the illuminated — tell me with a reminiscent smile, betwixt an aspiration and a shudder, not to be so tender about these things, — to lump all that, *i. e.* make a lump of gold of it. I was never refreshed by any advice on this subject; the highest I have heard was grovelling. It is not worth the while for you to undertake to reform the world in this particular. They tell me not to ask how my bread is buttered, — it will make me sick if I do, — and the like.[1]

It is discouraging to talk with men who will recognize no principles. How little use is made of reason in this world! You argue with a man for an hour, he

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 464, 465, 468; *Misc.*, Riv. 265, 269, 270.]

agrees with you step by step, you are approaching a triumphant conclusion, you think that you have converted him; but ah, no, he has a habit, he takes a pinch of snuff, he remembers that he entertained a different opinion at the commencement of the controversy, and his reverence for the past compels him to reiterate it now. You began at the butt of the pole to curve it, you gradually bent it round according to rule, and planted the other end in the ground, and already in imagination saw the vine curling round this segment of an arbor, under which a new generation was to recreate itself; but when you had done, just when the twig was bent, it sprang back to its former stubborn and unhandsome position like a bit of whalebone.

This world is a place of business. What an infinite bustle! I am awaked almost every night by the panting of the steam-engine. It interrupts my dreams. There is no sabbath. It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once.[1]

Concord Fight! Two killed on the patriots' side, and Luther Blanchard wounded! Why, here every ant was a Buttrick, — "Fire! for God's sake, fire!" — and thousands shared the fate of Davis and Hosmer. I have no doubt it was a principle they fought for as much as our ancestors, and not a threepenny tax on their tea.[2]

10 A. M. — Up river on ice to Fair Haven Pond.

The steam of the steam-engine rises to heaven this

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 456; *Misc.*, Riv. 254.]

[2] [*Walden*, p. 255; Riv. 358. See also pp. 209–212 of this volume.]

clear morning. The other day, when the weather was thick, I observed that it hugged the earth. Was the air lighter then? Some refer the music of the telegraph harp to the electricity passing along the wire! others, to the air passing through the glasses. The air is fresher and the sky clearer in the morning. We have this morning the clear, cold, continent sky of January. The river is frozen solidly, and I do not have to look out for openings. Now I can take that walk along the river highway and the meadow which leads me under the boughs of the maples and the swamp white oaks, etc., which in summer overhang the water. There I can now stand at my ease, and study their phenomena, amid the sweet-gale and button-bushes projecting above the snow and ice. I see the shore from the waterside. A liberal walk, so level and wide and smooth, without underbrush. I easily approach and study the boughs which usually overhang the water. In some places where the ice is exposed, I see a kind of crystallized, chaffy snow like little bundles of asbestos on its surface. I seek some sunny nook on the south side of a wood, which keeps off the cold wind, among the maples and the swamp white oaks which are frozen in, and there sit and anticipate the spring, and hear the chickadees and the belching of the ice. The sun has got a new power in his rays after all, cold as the weather is. He could not have warmed me so much a month ago, nor should I have heard such rumblings of the ice in December. I see where a maple has been wounded the sap is flowing out. Now, then, is the time to make sugar.

If I were to paint the short days of winter, I should

represent two towering icebergs, approaching each other like promontories, for morning and evening, with cavernous recesses, and a solitary traveller, wrapping his cloak about him and bent forward against a driving storm, just entering the narrow pass. I would paint the light of a taper at midday, seen through a cottage window half buried in snow and frost, and some pale stars in the sky, and the sound of the woodcutter's axe. The icebergs with cavernous recesses. In the foreground should appear the harvest, and far in the background, through the pass, should be seen the sowers in the fields and other evidences of spring. The icebergs should gradually approach, and on the right and left the heavens should be shaded off from the light of midday to midnight with its stars. The sun low in the sky.

I look between my legs up the river across Fair Haven. Subverting the head, we refer things to the heavens; the sky becomes the ground of the picture, and where the river breaks through low hills which slope to meet each other a quarter of a mile off, appears a mountain pass, so much nearer is it to heaven. We are compelled to call it something which relates it to the heavens rather than the earth. But I think that the mirage is not so great in the morning. Perhaps there is some advantage in looking at the landscape thus at this season, since it is a plain white field hence to the horizon.

I cut my initials on the bee tree. Now, at 11.30 perhaps, the sky begins to be slightly overcast. The northwest is the god of the winter, as the southwest of the summer. Interesting the forms of clouds, often, as now, like flames, or more like the surf curling before it breaks,

reminding me of the prows of ancient vessels, which have their pattern or prototype again in the surf, as if the wind made a surf of the mist. Thus, as the fishes look up at the waves, we look up at the clouds. It is pleasant to see the reddish-green leaves of the lambkill still hanging with fruit above the snow, for I am now crossing the shrub oak plain to the Cliffs.

I find a place on the south side of this rocky hill, where the snow is melted and the bare gray rock appears, covered with mosses and lichens and beds of oak leaves in the hollows, where I can sit, and an invisible flame and smoke seems to ascend from the leaves, and the sun shines with a genial warmth, and you can imagine the hum of bees amid flowers. That is a near approach to summer. A summer heat reflected from the dry leaves, which reminds you of the sweet-fern and those summer afternoons which are longer than a winter day. Though you sit on a mere oasis in the snow.

I love that the rocks should appear to have some spots of blood on them, Indian blood at least; to be convinced that the earth has been crowded with men, living, enjoying, suffering, that races passed away have stained the rocks with their blood, that the mould I tread on has been animated, aye, humanized. I am the more at home. I farm the dust of my ancestors, though the chemist's analysis may not detect it. I go forth to redeem the meadows they have become. I compel them to take refuge in turnips.

The snow is melting on the rocks; the water trickles down in shining streams; the mosses look bright; the first awakening of vegetation at the root of the saxi-

frage. As I go by the farmer's yard, the hens cackle more solidly, as if eggs were the burden of the strain.

A horse's fore legs are handier than his hind ones; the latter but fall into the place which the former have found. They have the advantage of being nearer the head, the source of intelligence. He strikes and paws with them. It is true he kicks with the hind legs, but that is a very simple and unscientific action, as if his whole body were a whip-lash and his heels the snapper.

The constant reference in our lives, even in the most trivial matters, to the superhuman is wonderful. If a portrait is painted, neither the wife's opinion of the husband, nor the husband's of the wife, nor either's opinion of the artist — not man's opinion of man — is final and satisfactory. Man is not the final judge of the humblest work, though it be piling wood. The queen and the chambermaid, the king and the hired man, the Indian and the slave, alike appeal to God.

Each man's mode of speaking of the sexual relation proves how sacred his own relations of that kind are. We do not respect the mind that can jest on this subject.

If the husband and wife quarrel over their coffee, if the pie is underdone, if your partner treads on your toes, there is a silent appeal to the just and eternal gods, — or to time and posterity, at least.

March 5. It is encouraging to know that, though every kernel of truth has been carefully swept out of our churches, there yet remains the dust of truth on their walls, so that if you should carry a light into

them they would still, like some powder-mills, blow up at once.

The only man in Concord who has interested himself in the spiritual knockers, who has had them at his house, is Dr. Dillingham!!

3 P. M. — To the beeches.

A misty afternoon, but warm, threatening rain. Standing on Walden, whose eastern shore is laid waste, men walking on the hillside a quarter of a mile off are singularly interesting objects, seen through this mist, which has the effect of a mirage. The persons of the walkers black on the snowy ground, and the horizon limited, makes them the more important in the scene. This kind of weather is very favorable to our landscape. I must not forget the lichen-painted boles of the beeches.

So round even to the white bridge, where the red maple buds are already much expanded, foretelling summer, though our eyes see only winter as yet. As I sit under their boughs, looking into the sky, I suddenly see the myriad black dots of the expanded buds against the sky. Their sap is flowing. The elm buds, too, I find are expanded, though on earth are no signs of spring.

I find myself inspecting little granules, as it were, on the bark of trees, little shields or apothecia springing from a thallus, such is the mood of my mind, and I call it studying lichens. That is merely the prospect which is afforded me. It is short commons and innutritious. Surely I might take wider views. The habit of looking at things microscopically, as the lichens on the trees and rocks, really prevents my seeing aught

else in a walk. Would it not be noble to study the shield of the sun on the thallus of the sky, cerulean, which scatters its infinite sporules of light through the universe? To the lichenist is not the shield (or rather the apothecium) of a lichen disproportionately large compared with the universe? The minute apothecium of the pertusaria, which the woodchopper never detected, occupies so large a space in my eye at present as to shut out a great part of the world.

March 6. La Hontan, hunting moose (*orignal*) in Canada in 1686, says, facing a cruel north wind in winter, "One of my soldiers told me that it was necessary to have blood of *eau-de-vie*, body of brass, and eyes of glass, to resist a cold so sharp (*âpre*)."

3 P. M. — To Harrington's.

Old Mr. Joe Hosmer chopping wood at his door. He is full of meat. Had a crack with him. I told him I was studying lichens, pointing to his wood. He thought I meant the wood itself. Well, he supposed he 'd had more to do with wood than I had. "Now," said he, "there are two kinds of white oak. Most people would n't notice it. When I 've been chopping, say along in March, after the sap begins to start, I 'll sometimes come to an oak that will color my axe steel-blue like a sword-blade. Well, that oak is fine-grained and heavier than the common, and I call it blue white oak, for no other blues my axe so. Then there are two kinds of black oak, or yellow-bark. One is the mean black oak, or bastard. Then there 's a kind of red oak smells like urine three or four days old." It was really respectable in

him that he avoided using the vulgar name of this oak. In an old man like him it was a true delicacy. Of this red oak he told me a story. There was old Mr. Joe Derby. He came after houses were built. He settled near the present Derby place. Well, his manteltree was very large, of red oak hewn square, — they used wood in those days, — and in course of time it had become charred with heat, and you could break coals off it. He could remember the house; it was more than a hundred years old. Well, when they pulled it down, old Mr. Derby told him that he split it up and put

[The rest of the page (a half) cut out.]

been the track of an otter near the Clamshell Hill, for it looks too large for a mink, — nearly an inch and a half in diameter and nearly round. Occasionally it looked as if a rail had been drawn along through the thin snow over the ice, with faint footprints at long intervals. I saw where he came out of a hole in the ice, and tracked him forty rods, to where he went into another. Saw where he appeared to have been sliding.

Found three or four parmelias (*caperata*) in fruit on a white oak on the high river-bank between Tarbell's and Harrington's.

[The rest of the page (a half) cut out.]

I remember a few words that I had with a young Englishman in the citadel, who politely undertook to do the honors of Quebec to me, whose clear, glowing Eng-

lish complexion I can still see. Perhaps he was a chaplain in the army. In answer to his information, I looked round with a half-suppressed smile at those preparations for war, Quebec all primed and cocked for it, and at length expressed some of my surprise. "Perhaps you hold the opinions of the Quakers," he replied. I thought, if there was any difference between us, it might be that I was born in modern times.

March 7. *Sunday.* A very pleasant, spring-promising day. Yet I walked up the river on the ice to Fair Haven Pond. As I cross the snow (2 P. M.) where it lies deepest in hollows, its surface honeycombed by the sun, I hear it suddenly sink under and around me with a crash, and look about for a tree or roof from which it may have fallen. It has melted next the earth, and my weight makes it fall. In one instance, when I jumped over a wall on to snow nearly three feet deep, I heard this loud and startling crash and looked round in vain to discover the cause of it. I hear it settle over many rods.

At 9 o'clock P. M. to the woods by the full moon.

The ground is thinly covered with a crusted snow, through which the dead grass and weeds appear, telling the nearness of spring. Though the snow-crust between me and the moon reflects the moon at a distance, westward it is but a dusky white; only where it is heaped up into a drift, or a steep bank occurs, is the moonlight reflected to me as from a phosphorescent place. I distinguish thus large tracts an eighth of a mile distant in the west, where a steep bank sloping

toward the moon occurs, which glow with a white, phosphorescent light, while all the surrounding snow is comparatively dark, as if shaded by the woods. I looked to see if these white tracts in the distant fields corresponded to openings in the woods, and found that they were places where the crystal mirrors were so disposed as to reflect the moon's light to me.

Going through the high field beyond the lone graveyard, I see the track of a boy's sled before me, and his footsteps shining like silver between me and the moon. And now I come to where they have coasted in a hollow in this upland bean-field, and there are countless tracks of sleds, and I forget that the sun shone on them in their sport, as if I had reached the region of perpetual twilight, and their sport appears more significant and symbolical now, more earnest. For what a man does abroad by night requires and implies more deliberate energy than what he is encouraged to do in the sunshine. He is more spiritual, less animal or vegetable, in the former case.

The student of lichens has his objects of study brought to his study on his fuel without any extra expense.

It is rather mild to-night. I can walk without gloves. As I look down the railroad, standing on the west brink of the Deep Cut, I seem to see in the manner in which the moon is reflected from the west slope covered with snow, in the sort of misty light as if a fine vapor were rising from it, a promise or sign of spring. This stillness is more impressive than any sound, — the moon, the stars, the trees, the snow, the sand when bare, —

a monumental stillness, whose void must be supplied by thought. It extracts thought from the beholder, as the void under a cupping-glass raises a swelling. How much a silent mankind might suggest! There is no snow on the trees. The moon appears to have waned a little, yet, with this snow on the ground, I can plainly see the words I write. What a contrast there may be between this moon and the next!

I do not know why such emphasis should be laid on certain events that transpire, why my news should be so trivial; considering what one's dreams and expectations are, why the developments should be so paltry. The news I hear for the most part is not news to my genius. It is the stalest repetition. These facts appear to float in the atmosphere, insignificant as the sporules of fungi, and impinge on my thallus; some neglected surface of my mind affords a basis for them, and hence a parasitic growth. We should wash ourselves clean of such news. Methinks I should hear with indifference if a trustworthy messenger were to inform me that the sun drowned himself last night.[1]

March 9. A warm spring rain in the night.

3 P. M. — Down the railroad.

Cloudy but springlike. When the frost comes out of the ground, there is a corresponding thawing of the man. The earth is now half bare. These March winds, which make the woods roar and fill the world with life and bustle, appear to wake up the trees out of their

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 471, 472; *Misc.*, Riv. 274.]

winter sleep and excite the sap to flow. I have no doubt they serve some such use, as well as to hasten the evaporation of the snow and water.

The railroad men have now their hands full. I hear and see bluebirds, come with the warm wind. The sand is flowing in the Deep Cut. I am affected by the sight of the moist red sand or subsoil under the edge of the sandy bank, under the pitch pines. The railroad is perhaps our pleasantest and wildest road. It only makes deep cuts into and through the hills. On it are no houses nor foot-travellers. The travel on it does not disturb me. The woods are left to hang over it. Though straight, is wild in its accompaniments. All is raw edges. Even the laborers on it are not like other laborers. Its houses, if any, are shanties, and its ruins the ruins of shanties, shells where the race that built the railroad dwelt, and the bones they gnawed lie about. I am cheered by the sound of running water now down the wooden troughs on each side the cut. Then it is the driest walking in wet weather, and the easiest in snowy. This road breaks the surface of the earth. Even the sight of smoke from the shanty excites me to-day. Already these puddles on the railroad, reflecting the pine woods, remind me of summer lakes.

When I hear the telegraph harp, I think I must read the Greek poets. This sound is like a brighter color, red, or blue, or green, where all was dull white or black. It prophesies finer senses, a finer life, a golden age. It is the poetry of the railroad, the heroic and poetic thoughts which the Irish laborers had at their toil now got expression, — that which has made the world mad

so long. Or is it the gods expressing their delight at this invention?

The flowing sand bursts out through the snow and overflows it where no sand was to be seen. I see where the banks have deposited great heaps, many cartloads, of clayey sand, as if they had relieved themselves of their winter's indigestions, and it is not easy to see where they came from.[1]

Again it rains, and I turn about.

The sound of water falling on rocks and of air falling on trees are very much alike.

Though cloudy, the air excites me. Yesterday all was tight as a stricture on my breast; to-day all is loosened. It is a different element from what it was. The sides of bushy hills where the snow is melted look, through this air, as if I were under the influence of some intoxicating liquor. The earth is not quite steady nor palpable to my sense, a little idealized. I see that the new chestnut sleepers that have been put down this winter are turned a very dark blue or blue black, and smell like dyestuff. The pond is covered with puddles. I see one farmer trimming his trees.

March 10. I was reminded, this morning before I rose, of those undescribed ambrosial mornings of summer which I can remember, when a thousand birds were heard gently twittering and ushering in the light, like the argument to a new canto of an epic and heroic poem. The serenity, the infinite promise, of such a morning! The song or twitter of birds drips from the

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 336, 340; Riv. 470, 476.]

leaves like dew. Then there was something divine and immortal in our life. When I have waked up on my couch in the woods and seen the day dawning, and heard the twittering of the birds.

P. M. — Through Deep Cut to Cliffs.

The mingled sand and water flowing down the bank, the water inclines ever to separate from the sand, and while the latter is detained by its weight and by friction beneath and on the sides, the water flows in a semi-cylindrical channel which it makes for itself, still carrying much sand with it. When the flowing drop of sand and water in front meets with new resistance, or the impetus of the water is diminished, perhaps by being absorbed, the drop of sand suddenly swells out laterally and dries, while the water, accumulating, pushes out a new sandy drop on one side and forms a new leafy lobe, and by other streams one is piled upon another. I have not observed any cylindrical canals this year. Did I ever? In some places when the sand has gone as far as it can flow, or the water prevails, the latter makes a true rivulet, which wears a channel through the sand it has washed down.

I see flocks of a dozen bluebirds together. The warble of this bird is innocent and celestial, like its color. Saw a sparrow, perhaps a song sparrow, flitting amid the young oaks where the ground was covered with snow. I think that this is an indication that the ground is quite bare a little further south. Probably the spring birds never fly far over a snow-clad country. A wood-chopper tells me he heard a robin this morning. I see the reticulated leaves of the rattlesnake-plantain in the

woods, quite fresh and green. What is the little chickweed-like plant already springing up on the top of the Cliffs? There are some other plants with bright-green leaves which have either started somewhat or have never suffered from the cold under the snow. Summer clenches hands with summer under the snow. I am pretty sure that I heard the chuckle of a ground squirrel among the warm and bare rocks of the Cliffs. The earth is perhaps two thirds bare to-day. The mosses are now very handsome, like young grass pushing up. Heard the phœbe note of the chickadee to-day for the first time. I had at first heard their *day-day-day* ungratefully, — ah! you but carry my thoughts back to winter, — but anon I found that they too had become spring birds; they had changed their note. Even they feel the influence of spring.

I see cup lichens (cladonias) with their cups beset inside and out with little leafets like shellwork.

The *Populus grandidentata* on the Cliffs, in a warm position, shows no cotton yet like that on Harrington's road.

March 11. 2 P. M. — To White Pond to sound it.

That dull-gray-barked willow shows the silvery down of its forthcoming catkins. I believe that I saw blackbirds yesterday. The ice in the pond is soft on the surface, but it is still more than a foot thick. Is that slender green weed which I draw up on my sounding-stone where it is forty feet deep and upward *Nitella gracilis* (allied to *Chara*), described in Loudon?

The woods I walked in in my youth are cut off. Is

it not time that I ceased to sing? My groves are invaded. Water that has been so long detained on the hills and uplands by frost is now rapidly finding its level in the ocean. All lakes without outlet are oceans, larger or smaller.

March 12. According to Linnæus, very many plants become perennial and arborescent in warm regions which with us are annual, as *Tropæolum*, *Beta*, *Majorana*,[1] *Malva arborea*, etc., for duration often depends more on the locality than on the plant. So is it with men. Under more favorable conditions the human plant that is short-lived and dwarfed becomes perennial and arborescent.

Linnæus thus classifies *solum* as it respects plants (I omit the explanation, etc.):[2]—

1. *Mare.*
2. *Littora maris.*
3. *Fontes.*
4. *Fluvii.*
5. *Ripae Fluviorum et Lacuum.*
6. *Lacus aqua pura repleti, fundo consistenti gaudent.* (Walden and others?)
7. *Stagna et Fossae fundo limoso et aqua quieta sunt repleta.*
8. *Paludes humo lutosa laxa et aqua referta, aestate siccescunt.* (Very wet meadows?)
9. *Cespitosae Paludes, refertae humo mixta Sphagno, tectae tuberibus* (hummocks?), *cinctae aqua limosa, profunda.* (Peat meadows?)
10. *Inundata loca hyeme repleta aqua, aestate putrida exsiccata, imbribus interdum suffusa.* (Round Pond on Marlborough road and Goose Pond?)

[1] [Now *Origanum.*] [2] [In *Philosophia Botanica.*]

11. *Uliginosa mihi sunt loca spongiosa, aqua putrida laborantia, colonis invisa, nec segetis, nec foeni proventui apta, innotescentia propriis plantis.* (Swamps?)
12. *Alpes.*
13. *Rupes.* (Cliffs, etc.?)
14. *Montes et Colles sabulosi, aridi, steriles, aquam vix admittunt.*
15. *Campi aprici ventis expositi, sicci, asperi sunt.* (Most of our pastures? Parts of Cape Cod?)
16. *Sylvae umbrosae terra sabulosa sterili refertae.* (Most of our woods?)
17. *Nemora ad radices Montium, inter Lucos, humo spongiosa tecta, umbrosa semper, exhalantia continuo aerem humidiusculum, ventis minime expositum, Plantas Vernales, frigoris et caloris impatientes, alunt.* (Our primitive woods?)
18. *Prata Herbis luxuriantia, campis depressis, convallibusque constant.* (Low rich grass grounds?)
19. *Pascua differunt a pratis, quod steriliora, sicciora et magis sabulosa.* (A low pasture?)
20. *Arva.* (Fields at rest.)
21. *Agri terra subacta laeta gaudent.* (Cultivated fields?)
22. *Versurae s. Margines agrorum, tanquam prata* (! !) *stercorata considerantur.*
23. *Culta.* (Rich soil in gardens?)
24. *Fimeta.* (Dung-heaps?)
25. *Ruderata.*

He gives examples of the plants which grow in each locality.

I have learned in a shorter time and more accurately the meaning of the scientific terms used in botany from a few plates of figures at the end of the "Philosophia Botanica," with the names annexed, than a volume of explanations or glossaries could teach. And, that the alternate pages to the plates may not be left blank, he has given on them very concise and important in-

struction to students of botany. This lawgiver of science, this systematizer, this methodist, carries his system into his studies in the field. On one of these little pages he gives some instruction concerning *herbatio*, or what the French called *herborisations*, — we say botanizing. Into this he introduces law and order and system, and describes with the greatest economy of words what some would have required a small volume to tell, all on a small page; tells what dress you shall wear, what instruments you shall carry, what season and hour you shall observe, — *viz.* "from the leafing of the trees, Sirius excepted, to the fall of the leaf, twice a week in summer, once in spring, from seven in the morning till seven at night," — when you shall dine and take your rest, etc., in a crowd or dispersed, etc., how far you shall go, — two miles and a half at most, — what you shall collect and what kind of observations make, etc., etc.

Railroad to Walden, 3 P. M.

I see the *Populus* (apparently *tremuloides*, not *grandidentata*) at the end of the railroad causeway, showing the down of its ament. Bigelow makes it flower in April, the *grandidentata* in May.

I see the sand flowing in the Cut and hear the harp at the same time. Who shall say that the primitive forces are not still at work? Nature has not lost her pristine vigor, neither has he who sees this. To see the first dust fly is a pleasant sight. I saw it on the east side of the Deep Cut.

These heaps of sand foliage remind me of the lacini-

ated, lobed, and imbricated thalluses of some lichens, — somewhat linear-laciniate. It cannot make much odds what the sand is, for I have seen it in the soil of our garden. They come out from the interior of the earth like bowels — a rupture in the spring — and bury the snow. The crust of the snow is completely concealed with the sand for an eighth of a mile. They also remind me sometimes of masses of rockweed on the rocks. At any moment the creative stream will be seen flowing in a restricted channel or artery, but it is forming new lobes, and at last, in the ditch, it forms sands, as at the mouths of rivers, in which the outlines of the different lobes are almost lost, are dissipated into mere shaded outlines on the flat floor.[1]

Bent has left the chestnuts about Walden till the sap is well up, that the bark may peel. He has cut the other trees. I saw the ants crawling about torpidly on the stump of an oak which had been sawed this winter. The choppers think they have seen them a fortnight.

The whistling of the wind, which makes one melancholy, inspires another.

The little grain of wheat, *triticum*, is the noblest food of man. The lesser grains of other grasses are the food of passerine birds at present. Their diet is like man's.

The gods can never afford to leave a man in the world who is privy to any of their secrets. They cannot have a spy here. They will at once send him packing. How can you walk on ground when you see through it?

The telegraph harp has spoken to me more distinctly and effectually than any man ever did.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 336, 337; Riv. 470, 471.]

March 14. *Sunday.* Rain, rain, rain; but even this is fair weather after so much snow. The ice on Walden has now for some days looked white like snow, the surface being softened by the sun. I see a flock of blackbirds and hear their *conqueree.* The ground is mostly bare now. Again I hear the chickadee's spring note. I remember that one spring, when I travelled in Maine, the woods were ringing with it, as I rode in the stage, *phœ-be.*[1]

Charlevoix baptized a dying infant on the bank of the Illinois River, 1721. He writes, "I confess to you, Madame, that though my travels should be altogether useless else, I should not regret the fatigues and dangers of it, since, according to all appearances, if I had not come to Pimiteouy, this infant would never have entered heaven, where I do not doubt it will be presently." [2] Celebrated historian.

March 15. This afternoon I throw off my outside coat. A mild spring day. I must hie to the Great Meadows. The air is full of bluebirds. The ground almost entirely bare. The villagers are out in the sun, and every man is happy whose work takes him outdoors. I go by Sleepy Hollow toward the Great Fields. I lean over a rail to hear what is in the air, liquid with the bluebirds' warble. My life partakes of infinity. The air is as deep as our natures. Is the drawing in of this vital air attended with no more glorious results than I witness? The air is a velvet cushion against which I press my

[1] Probably white-throat sparrow.

[2] [*Histoire de la Nouvelle France.*]

ear. I go forth to make new demands on life. I wish to begin this summer well; to do something in it worthy of it and of me; to transcend my daily routine and that of my townsmen; to have my immortality now, that it be in the *quality* of my daily life; to pay the greatest price, the greatest tax, of any man in Concord, and enjoy the most!! I will give all I am for *my* nobility. I will pay all my days for *my* success. I pray that the life of this spring and summer may ever lie fair in my memory. May I dare as I have never done! May I persevere as I have never done! May I purify myself anew as with fire and water, soul and body! May my melody not be wanting to the season! May I gird myself to be a hunter of the beautiful, that naught escape me! May I attain to a youth never attained! I am eager to report the glory of the universe; may I be worthy to do it; to have got through with regarding human values, so as not to be distracted from regarding divine values. It is reasonable that a man should be something worthier at the end of the year than he was at the beginning.

Yesterday's rain, in which I was glad to be drenched, has advanced the spring, settled the ways, and the old footpath and the brook and the plank bridge behind the hill are suddenly uncovered, which have [been] buried so long; as if we had returned to our earth after an absence, and took pleasure in finding things so nearly in the state in which we left them.

We go out without our coats, saunter along the street, look at the aments of the willow beginning to appear and the swelling buds of the maple and the elm. The Great Meadows are water instead of ice. I see the ice

on the bottom in white sheets. And now one great cake rises amid the bushes (behind Peter's). I see no ducks.

Most men find farming unprofitable; but there are some who can get their living anywhere. If you set them down on a bare rock they will thrive there. The true farmer is to those who come after him and take the benefit of his improvements, like the lichen which plants itself on the bare rock, and grows and thrives and cracks it and makes a vegetable mould, to the garden vegetable which grows in it.

March 16. Before sunrise.

With what infinite and unwearied expectation and proclamation the cocks usher in every dawn, as if there had never been one before! And the dogs bark still, and the thallus of lichens springs, so tenacious of life is nature.

Spent the day in Cambridge Library. Walden is not yet melted round the edge. It is, perhaps, more suddenly warm this spring than usual. Mr. Bull thinks that the pine grosbeaks, which have been unusually numerous the past winter, have killed many branches of his elms by budding them, and that they will die and the wind bring them down, as heretofore. Saw a large flock of geese go over Cambridge and heard the robins in the College Yard.

The Library a wilderness of books. Looking over books on Canada written within the last three hundred years, could see how one had been built upon another, each author consulting and referring to his predecessors. You could read most of them without changing

your leg on the steps. It is necessary to find out exactly what books to read on a given subject. Though there may be a thousand books written upon it, it is only important to read three or four; they will contain all that is essential, and a few pages will show which they are. Books which are books are all that you want, and there are but half a dozen in any thousand. I saw that while we are clearing the forest in our westward progress, we are accumulating a forest of books in our rear, as wild and unexplored as any of nature's primitive wildernesses. The volumes of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries, which lie so near on the shelf, are rarely opened, are effectually forgotten and not implied by our literature and newspapers. When I looked into Purchas's Pilgrims, it affected me like looking into an impassable swamp, ten feet deep with sphagnum, where the monarchs of the forest, covered with mosses and stretched along the ground, were making haste to become peat. Those old books suggested a certain fertility, an Ohio soil, as if they were making a humus for new literatures to spring in. I heard the bellowing of bullfrogs and the hum of mosquitoes reverberating through the thick embossed covers when I had closed the book. Decayed literature makes the richest of all soils.

March 17. I catch myself philosophizing most abstractly when first returning to consciousness in the night or morning. I make the truest observations and distinctions then, when the will is yet wholly asleep and the mind works like a machine without friction.

I am conscious of having, in my sleep, transcended the limits of the individual, and made observations and carried on conversations which in my waking hours I can neither recall nor appreciate. As if in sleep our individual fell into the infinite mind, and at the moment of awakening we found ourselves on the confines of the latter. On awakening we resume our enterprise, take up our bodies and become limited mind again. We meet and converse with those bodies which we have previously animated. There is a moment in the dawn, when the darkness of the night is dissipated and before the exhalations of the day commence to rise, when we see things more truly than at any other time. The light is more trustworthy, since our senses are purer and the atmosphere is less gross. By afternoon all objects are seen in mirage.

Frank Brown showed me the pintail duck day before yesterday, which he had received from Duxbury. To-day the fox-colored sparrow on its way to Hudson's Bay.

March 18. This morning the ground is again covered with snow, and the storm still continues.

That is a pretty good story told of a London citizen just retired to country life on a fortune, who, wishing, among other novel rustic experiments, to establish a number of bee communities, would not listen to the advice of his under steward, but, asking fiercely "how he could be so thoughtless as to recommend a purchase of what might so easily be procured on the Downs, ordered him to hire ten women to go in quest of bees the next morning, and to prepare hives for the reception

of the captives. Early the next day the detachment started for the Downs, each furnished with a tin canister to contain the spoil; and after running about for hours, stunning the bees with blows from their straw bonnets, and encountering stings without number, secured about thirty prisoners who were safely lodged in a hive. But, as has been the fate of many arduous campaigns, little advantage accrued from all this fatigue and danger. Next morning the Squire sallied forth to visit his new colony. As he approached, a loud humming assured him that they were hard at work, when to his infinite disappointment, it was found that the bees had made their escape through a small hole in the hive, leaving behind them only an unfortunate humblebee, whose bulk prevented his squeezing himself through the aperture, and whose loud complaints had been mistaken for the busy hum of industry." You must patiently study the method of nature, and take advice of the under steward, in the establishment of all communities, both insect and human.

This afternoon the woods and walls and the whole face of the country wear once more a wintry aspect, though there is more moisture in the snow and the trunks of the trees are whitened now on a more southerly or southeast side. These slight falls of snow which come and go again so soon when the ground is partly open in the spring, perhaps helping to open and crumble and prepare it for the seed, are called "the poor man's manure." They are, no doubt, more serviceable still to those who are rich enough to have some manure spread on their grass ground, which the melting snow

helps dissolve and soak in and carry to the roots of the grass. At any rate, it is all the poor man has got, whether it is good or bad. There is more rain than snow now falling, and the lichens, especially the *Parmelia conspersa*, appear to be full of fresh fruit, though they are nearly buried in snow. The *Evernia jubata* might now be called even a *very* dark olive-green. I feel a certain sympathy with the pine or oak fringed with lichens in a wet day. They remind me of the dewy and ambrosial vigor of nature and of man's prime. The pond is still very little melted around the shore. As I go by a pile of red oak recently split in the woods and now wet with rain, I perceive its strong urine-like scent. I see within the trunks solid masses of worm or ant borings, turned to a black or very dark brown mould, purest of virgin mould, six inches in diameter and some feet long, within the tree, — the tree turned to mould again before its fall. But this snow has not driven back the birds. I hear the song sparrow's simple strain, most genuine herald of the spring, and see flocks of chubby northern birds with the habit of snowbirds, passing north.

A wise man will not go out of his way for information. He might as well go out of nature, or commit suicide.

I am glad to hear that naked eyes are of any use, for I cannot afford to buy a Munich telescope.

Probably the bees could not make industry attractive under the circumstances described above.

March 19. Observed as I stood with Channing on the brink of the rill on Conantum, where, falling a few

inches, it produced bubbles, our images, three quarters of an inch long and black as imps, appearing to lean toward each other on account of the convexity of the bubble. There was nothing but these two distinct black manikins and the branch of the elm over our heads to be seen. The bubbles rapidly burst and succeeded one another.

March 20. As to the winter birds, — those which came here in the winter, — I saw first that rusty sparrow-like bird flying in flocks with the smaller sparrows early in the winter and sliding down the grass stems to their seeds, which clucked like a hen, and F. Brown thought to be the young of the purple finch; then I saw, about Thanksgiving time and later in the winter, the pine grosbeaks, large and carmine, a noble bird; then, in midwinter, the snow bunting, the white snowbird, sweeping low like snowflakes from field to field over the walls and fences. And now, within a day or two, I have noticed the chubby slate-colored snowbird (*Fringilla hyemalis?*), and I drive the flocks before me on the railroad causeway as I walk. It has two white feathers in its tail.

It is cold as winter to-day, the ground still covered with snow, and the stars twinkle as in winter nights.

The fox-colored sparrow is about now.

March 21. Railroad causeway at Heywood's meadow.

The ice no sooner melts than you see the now red and yellow pads of the yellow lily beginning to shoot up from the bottom of the pools and ditches, for there

they yield to the first impulses of the heat and feel not the chilling blasts of March.

This evening a little snow falls. The weather about these days is cold and wintry again.

March 23. I heard, this forenoon, a pleasant jingling note from the slate-colored snowbird on the oaks in the sun on Minott's hillside. Apparently they sing with us in the pleasantest days before they go northward.

Minott thinks that the farmers formerly used their meadow-hay better, gave it more sun, so that the cattle liked it as well as the English now.

As I cannot go upon a Northwest Passage, then I will find a passage round the actual world where I am. Connect the Behring Straits and Lancaster Sounds of thought; winter on Melville Island, and make a chart of Banks Land; explore the northward-trending Wellington Inlet, where there is said to be a perpetual open sea, cutting my way through floes of ice.

March 24. The night of the 24th, quite a deep snow covered the ground.

March 26. Walden not melted about shore.

March 28. *Sunday.* A pleasant afternoon; cool wind but warm sun. Snow almost all gone. The yellow lily leaves are pushing up in the ditch beyond Hubbard's Grove (this is not so warm a place as Heywood's meadow under the causeway), hard-rolled and triangular, with a sharp point with which to pierce the mud;

green at the tips and yellow below. The leaf is rolled in from both sides to the midrib. This is, perhaps, to be regarded as the most obvious sign of advancing spring, for the skunk-cabbage may be seen in warm weather in January. The latter is the first conspicuous growth on the surface. It now shows its agreeably variegated, not yet unfolded, leaves in the meadows. Saw dead frogs, and the mud stirred by a living one, in this ditch, and afterward in Conantum Brook a living frog, the first of the season; also a yellow-spotted tortoise by the causeway side in the meadow near Hubbard's Bridge. Fresh-looking caddis-worm cases in the ditch.

The smoky maple swamps have now got a reddish tinge from their expanding buds.

I have not noticed any new movements among the farmers, unless a little more activity in carting out manure and spreading it on their grass grounds.

Observed a singular circle round the moon to-night between nine and ten, the moon being about half full,

or in its first quarter, and the sky *pretty* clear, — a very bright and distinct circle about the moon, and a second,

larger circle, less distinct, extending to the east of this, cutting the former and having the moon on its circumference or at least where its circumference would be. The inner circle is very contracted and more distinct on its eastern side, included within the larger, and it appears to shed a luminous mist from all sides.[1]

10.15 P. M. — The geese have just gone over, making a great cackling and awaking people in their beds. They will probably settle in the river. Who knows but they had expected to find the pond open?

March 29. An Eskimo, one of a littoral people, inquired with surprise of Sir John Richardson, "Are not all lands islands?"

Observed yesterday that Fair Haven Pond was covered with ice. Many plants which have been covered with snow now begin to show green about the roots, and so they push forward till the green prevails over the withered portion of their leaves. There are many of which you are doubtful whether they have been kept fresh and green under the snow, or have recently put forth their leaves in the spring. I observe to-day the buttercup, very common, the pasture thistle, etc., etc., what perhaps are chickweeds? The radical leaves of some, like sorrel, appear never to wither. Saw sportsmen out this morning, a boat on the meadows, men who heard the

[1] [If the drawing shows the way the moon and circles actually appeared, the letters W and E should evidently be transposed and "east" and "eastern" in the description should read "west" and "western."]

geese last night. It is but a day or two that I have seen a boat on the meadows. The water on them has looked very dark from the street. Their color depends on the position of the beholder in relation to the direction of the wind. There is more water and it is more ruffled at this season than at any other, and the waves look quite angry and black.

Going to the Second Division Brook.

There is an evident spring in the grass about springs and brooks, as at Tarbell's. Some mosses now in fruit. Icicles still form under the banks at night on the north side of hills, from the dripping of the melting snow during the day. The leaves of the rattlesnake-plantain continue green but not so distinctly reticulated. Struck Second Division Brook at the old dam. It is as deep as wide, three feet or more, with a very handsome sandy bottom, rapidly flowing and meandering. A very attractive brook, to trout, etc., as well as men. It not only meanders as you look down on it, but the line of its bottom is very serpentine, in this wise, successively deep and shallow. There is a great volume of water for so small a show as it makes. The sands, where they are rippled, are agreeably diversified with the black sediment of decayed wood and leaves in the ripple-marks. This apparently is not a deep or a peat meadow, but has a sandy foundation. The only obvious signs of spring in the vegetation of this meadow are the just expanding downy buds of a rather late kind of slender willow that stands in the brook and, if this can be regarded as a spring

phenomenon, the green leaves of the cowslip everywhere. Saw two wood tortoises at the bottom of the brook, one upon another. The upper and larger one was decidedly bronze on the back; the under one, with more sharply grooved scales. The former, perhaps the male, with a decided depression of the sternum. Their legs a reddish orange. In the deeper parts of the brook, where, in the elbow of a meander, it had gullied under the bank, the surface was narrowest, and the dead grass almost met, making coverts for the trout. These tortoises crawled off very clumsily on the bottom. The flippers on one side were not both put forward at the same time, but one moved up to the other. Found the mayflower budded, though mostly covered with snow. There commenced to fall, not hail, but cotton-like pellets of snow, or like crispy snow broken up into triangular prismical [*sic*] pieces.

The *Populus tremuloides*, the round fine-toothed leaved aspen, shows the influence of the spring, this and some of the willows, more than any other trees or shrubs. Over a sandy bottom the brook water has one color; over the black sediment of decayed leaves another.

What animal more clumsy than the tortoise? If it wishes to get into the brook, it crawls to its edge and then tumbles, lets itself fall, turning a somerset, perhaps, from the bank to the water, — resigns itself to mere gravity, drawing in its head and members.

March 30. Dug some parsnips this morning. They break off about ten inches from the surface, the ground being frozen there.

The Greek word ἔαρ runs in my head in connection with the season and Richardson's Book.

The Cliffs remind me of that narrow place in the brook where two meadows nearly meet, with floating grass, though the water is deeper there under the bank than anywhere. So the Cliffs are a place where two summers nearly meet. Put up a bluebird-box, and found a whole egg in it. Saw a pewee from the railroad causeway.

Having occasion to-day to put up a long ladder against the house, I found, from the trembling of my nerves with the exertion, that I had not exercised that part of my system this winter. How much I may have lost! It would do me good to go forth and work hard and sweat. Though the frost is nearly out of the ground, the winter has not broken up in me. It is a backward season with me. Perhaps we grow older and older till we no longer sympathize with the revolution of the seasons, and our winters never break up.

To-day, as frequently for some time past, we have a raw east wind, which is rare in winter. I see as yet very little, perhaps no, new growth in the plants in open fields, but only the green radical leaves which have been kept fresh under the snow; but if I should explore carefully about their roots, I should find some expanding buds and even new-rising shoots. The farmers are making haste to clear up their wood-lots, which they have cut off the past winter, to get off the tops and brush, that they may not be too late and injure the young sprouts and lose a year's growth in the operation, also that they may be ready for their spring work.

From the Cliffs I see that Fair Haven Pond is open over the channel of the river, — which is in fact thus only revealed, of the same width as elsewhere, running from the end of Baker's Wood to the point of the Island. The slight current there has worn away the ice. I never knew before exactly where the channel was. It is pretty central. I perceive the hollow sound from the rocky ground as I tread and stamp about the Cliffs, and am reminded how much more sure children are to notice this peculiarity than grown persons. I remember when I used to make this a regular part of the entertainment when I conducted a stranger to the Cliffs. On the warm slope of the Cliffs the radical (?) leaves of the St. John's-wort (somewhat spurge-like), small on slender sprigs, have been evergreen under the snow. In this warm locality there is some recent growth nearest the ground. The leaves of the *Saxifraga vernalis* on the most mossy rocks are quite fresh. That large evergreen leaf sometimes mistaken for the mayflower is the *Pyrola rotundifolia* and perhaps some other species. What are those leaves in rounded beds, curled and hoary beneath, reddish-brown above, looking as if covered with frost? It is now budded, — a white, downy bud.[1]

March 31. Intended to get up early this morning and commence a series of spring walks, but clouds and drowsiness prevented. Early, however, I saw the clouds in the west, — for my window looks west, — suffused with rosy light, but that "flattery" is all forgotten

[1] The *Gnaphalium plantaginifolium* and *G. purpureum*.

now. How can one help being an early riser and walker in that season when the birds begin to twitter and sing in the morning?

The expedition in search of Sir John Franklin in 1850 landed at Cape Riley on the north side of Lancaster Sound, and one vessel brought off relics of Franklin, *viz.* "five pieces of beef, mutton, and pork bones, together with a bit of rope, a small rag of canvas, and a chip of wood cut by an ax." Richardson says: "From a careful examination of the beef bones, I came to the conclusion that they had belonged to pieces of salt-beef ordinarily supplied to the Navy, and that probably they and the other bones had been exposed to the atmosphere and to friction in rivulets of melted snow for four or five summers. The rope was proved by the ropemaker who examined it to have been made at Chatham, of Hungarian hemp, subsequent to 1841. The fragment of canvas, which seemed to have been part of a boat's swab, had the Queen's broad arrow painted on it; and the chip of wood was of ash, a tree which does not grow on the banks of any river that falls into the Arctic Sea. It had, however, been long exposed to the weather, and was likely to have been cut from a piece of drift-timber found lying on the spot, as the mark of the ax was recent compared to the surface of the wood, which might have been exposed to the weather for a century." "The grounds of these conclusions were fully stated in a report made to the Admiralty by Sir Edward Parry, myself, and other officers." Is not here an instance of the civilized man detecting the traces of a friend or foe

with a skill at least equal to that of the savage? Indeed it is in both cases but a common sense applied to the objects, and in a manner most familiar to the parties. The skill of the savage is just such a science, though referred sometimes to instinct.

Perhaps after the thawing of the trees their buds universally swell before they can be said to spring.

Perchance as we grow old we cease to spring with the spring, and we are indifferent to the succession of years, and they go by without epoch as months. Woe be to us when we cease to form new resolutions on the opening of a new year!

A cold, raw day with alternating hail-like snow and rain.

According to Gilpin, a copse is composed of forest trees mixed with brushwood, which last is periodically cut down in twelve or fourteen years.

What Gilpin says about copses, glens, etc., suggests that the different places to which the walker resorts may be profitably classified and suggest many things to be said. Gilpin prefers the continuous song of the insects in the shade of a copse to the buzzing vagrant fly in the glare of day. He says the pools in the forest must receive their black hue from clearness. I suppose he means they may have a muddy bottom or covered with dark dead leaves, but the water above must be clear to reflect the trees.

It would be worth the while to tell why a swamp pleases us, what kinds please us, also what weather, etc., etc., — analyze our impressions. Why the moaning of the storm gives me pleasure. Methinks it is be-

cause it puts to rout the trivialness of our fair-weather life and gives it at least a tragic interest. The sound has the effect of a pleasing challenge, to call forth our energy to resist the invaders of our life's territory. It is musical and thrilling, as the sound of an enemy's bugle. Our spirits revive like lichens in the storm. There is something worth living for when we are resisted, threatened. As at the last day we might be thrilled with the prospect of the grandeur of our destiny, so in these *first* days our destiny appears grander. What would the days, what would our life, be worth, if some nights were not dark as pitch, — of darkness tangible or that you can cut with a knife? How else could the light in the mind shine? How should we be conscious of the light of reason? If it were not for physical cold, how should we have discovered the warmth of the affections? I sometimes feel that I need to sit in a far-away cave through a three weeks' storm, cold and wet, to give a tone to my system. The spring has its windy March to usher it in, with many soaking rains reaching into April. Methinks I would share every creature's suffering for the sake of its experience and joy. The song sparrow and the transient fox-colored sparrow, — have they brought me no message this year? Do they go to lead heroic lives in Rupert's Land? They are so small, I think their destinies must be large. Have I heard what this tiny passenger has to say, while it flits thus from tree to tree? Is not the coming of the fox-colored sparrow something more earnest and significant than I have dreamed of? Can I forgive myself if I let it go to Rupert's Land before

I have appreciated it? God did not make this world in jest; no, nor in indifference. These migrating sparrows all bear messages that concern my life. I do not pluck the fruits in their season. I love the birds and beasts because they are mythologically in earnest. I see that the sparrow cheeps and flits and sings adequately to the great design of the universe; that man does not communicate with it, understand its language, because he is not at one with nature. I reproach myself because I have regarded with indifference the passage of the birds; I have thought them no better than I.

What philosopher can estimate the different values of a waking thought and a dream?

I hear late to-night the unspeakable rain, mingled with rattling snow against the windows, preparing the ground for spring.

VII

APRIL, 1852

(ÆT. 34)

April 1. Gilpin says well that the object of a light mist is a "*nearer distance.*"

Among winter plants, regarded as component parts of the forest, he thinks the fern the most picturesque. He says: "We are often at a loss to distinguish in pictures, the rising from the setting sun; though their characters are very different, both in the lights and shadows. The ruddy lights indeed of the evening are more easily distinguished: but it is not perhaps always sufficiently observed, that the shadows of the evening are much less opaque, than those of the morning."

This morning, the ground was completely covered with snow, and the water on the meadows looked dark and stormy and contrasted well with the white landscape. Now, at noon, the ground is once more as bare as before.

He is in the lowest scale of laborers who is merely an able-bodied man and can compete with others only in physical strength. Woodchoppers in this neighborhood get but fifty cents a cord, but, though many can chop two cords in a day in pleasant weather and under favorable circumstances, yet most do not average more than seventy-five cents a day, take the months together. But one among them of only equal physical

strength and skill as a chopper, having more wit, buys a cross-cut saw for four dollars, hires a man to help him at a dollar a day, and saws down trees all winter at ten cents apiece and thirty or forty a day, and clears two or more dollars a day by it. Yet as long as the world may last few will be found to buy the cross-cut saw, and probably the wages of the sawyer will never be reduced to a level with those of the chopper.

2 P. M. — To Flint's Pond cedar woods *via* railroad, returning by C. Smith's orchard.

Saw the first bee of the season on the railroad causeway, also a small red butterfly and, later, a large dark one with buff-edged wings.

Gilpin's "Forest Scenery" is a pleasing book, so moderate, temperate, graceful, roomy, like a gladed wood; not condensed; with a certain religion in its manners and respect for all the good of the past, rare in more recent books; and it is grateful to read after them. Somewhat spare indeed in the thoughts as in the sentences. Some of the cool wind of the copses converted into grammatical and graceful sentences, without heat. Not one of those humors come to a head which some modern books are, but some of the natural surface of a healthy mind.

Walden is all white ice, but little melted about the shores. The very sight of it, when I get so far on the causeway, though I hear the *spring* note of the chickadee from over the ice, carries my thoughts back at once some weeks toward winter, and a chill comes over them.

There is an early willow on sand-bank of the rail-

road, against the pond, by the fence, grayish below and yellowish above. The railroad men have dug around the sleepers that the sun may thaw the ground and let them down. It is not yet out. Cut across near Baker's barn. The swollen buds of some trees now give a new tint to their tops seen at a distance, — to the maples at least. Baker's peach orchard looks at this distance purplish below and red above, the color of the last year's twigs. The geranium (?) [1] is the most common green leaf to be seen everywhere on the surface now the snow is gone.

They have been shooting great numbers of muskrats the last day or two. Is that the red osier (cornel or viburnum) near the grape-vine on the Bare Hill road? How sure the farmer is to find out what bush affords the best withes, little of a botanist as he is! The mountains seen from Bare Hill are very fine now in the horizon, so evanescent, being broadly spotted white and blue like the skins of some animals, the white predominating. The Peterboro Hills to the north are almost all white. The snow has melted more on the more southern mountains. With their white mantles, notwithstanding the alternating dark patches, they melt into the sky. Yet perhaps the white portions may be distinguished by the peculiar light of the sun shining on them. They are like a narrow strip of broadly spotted leopard-skin, the saddle-cloth of the sun spread along the horizon.

I am surprised to find Flint's Pond frozen still, which should have been open a week ago. The Great Sud-

[1] Cowslip.

bury Meadows covered with water are revealed. Blue they look over the woods. Each part of the river seen further north shines like silver in the sun, and the little pond in the woods west of this hill is half open water. Cheering, that water with its reflections, compared with this opaque dumb pond. How unexpectedly dumb and poor and cold does Nature look, when, where we had expected to find a glassy lake reflecting the skies and trees in the spring, we find only dull, white ice! Such am I, no doubt, to many friends. But, now that I have reached the cedar hill, I see that there is about an acre of open water, perhaps, over Bush Island in the middle of the pond, and there are some water-fowl there on the edge of the ice, — mere black spots, though I detect their character by discovering a relative motion, — and some are swimming about in the water. The pond is, perhaps, the handsomer, after all, for this distant patch only of blue water, in the midst of the field of white ice. Each enhances the other. It is an azure spot, an elysian feature, in your cold companion, making the imagined concealed depths seem deeper and rarer. This pond is worth coming to, if only because it is larger than Walden. I can so easily fancy it indefinitely large. It represents to me that Icy Sea of which I have been reading in Sir J. Richardson's book.

The prevailing color of the woods at present, excepting the evergreens, is russet, a little more red or grayish, as the case may be, than the earth, for those are the colors of the withered leaves and the branches; the earth has the lighter hue of withered grass. Let me

see how soon the woods will have acquired a new color. Went over the hill toward the eastern end of the pond. What is the significance of odors, of the odoriferous woods? Sweet and yellow birch, sassafras, fever-bush, etc., are an interesting clan to me. When we bruise them in our walk, we are suddenly exhilarated by their odor. This sweet scent soon evaporates, and you must break the twig afresh. If you cut it, it is not as if you break it. Some, like the sassafras, have brought a great price as articles of commerce. No wonder that men thought they might have some effect toward renovating their lives. Gosnold, the discoverer of Cape Cod, carried home a cargo of sassafras. What could be more grateful to the discoverer of a new country than a new fragrant wood?

Gilpin's is a book in which first there is nothing to offend, and secondly something to attract and please.

The branches of the young black birch grow very upright, as it were appressed to the main stem. Their buds appear a little expanded now. Saw the fox-colored sparrows and slate-colored snowbirds on Smith's Hill, the latter singing in the sun, — a pleasant jingle.

The mountains, which an hour ago were white, are now all blue, the mistiness has increased so much in the horizon, and crept even into the vales of the distant woods. The mist is in wreaths or stripes because we see the mist of successive vales. There could not easily be a greater contrast than between this morning's and this evening's landscapes. The sun now an hour high.

Now I see the river-reach, far in the north. The more distant river is ever the most ethereal.

Sat awhile before sunset on the rocks in Saw Mill Brook. A brook need not be large to afford us pleasure by its sands and meanderings and falls and their various accompaniments. It is not so much size that we want as picturesque beauty and harmony. If the sound of its fall fills my ear it is enough. I require that the rocks over which it falls be agreeably disposed, and prefer that they be covered with lichens. The height and volume of the fall is of very little importance compared with the appearance and disposition of the rocks over which it falls, the agreeable diversity of still water, rapids, and falls, and of the surrounding scenery. I require that the banks and neighboring hillsides be not cut off, but excite a sense of at least graceful wildness. One or two small evergreens, especially hemlocks, standing gracefully on the brink of the rill, contrasting by their green with the surrounding deciduous trees when they have lost their leaves, and thus enlivening the scene and betraying their attachment to the water. It would be no more pleasing to me if the stream were a mile wide and the hemlocks five feet in diameter. I believe that there is a harmony between the hemlock and the water which it overhangs not explainable. In the first place, its green is especially grateful to the eye the greater part of the year in any locality, and in the winter, by its verdure overhanging and shading the water, it concentrates in itself the beauty of all fluviatile trees. It loves to stand with its foot close to the water, its roots running over the rocks of the shore, and two or more on opposite sides of a brook make the most beautiful frame to a waterscape, especially

in deciduous woods, where the light is sombre and not too glaring. It makes the more complete frame because its branches, particularly in young specimens such as I am thinking of, spring from so near the ground, and it makes so dense a mass of verdure. There are many larger hemlocks covering the steep sidehill forming the bank of the Assabet, where they are successively undermined by the water, and they lean at every angle over the water. Some are almost horizontally directed, and almost every year one falls in and is washed away. The place is known as the "Leaning Hemlocks."

But to return to Saw Mill Run. I love that the green fronds of the fern, pressed by the snow, lie on its rocks. It is a great advantage to take in so many parts at one view. We love to see the water stand, or seem to stand, at many different levels within a short distance, while we sit in its midst, some above, some below us, and many successive falls in different directions, meandering in the course of the fall, rather than one "chute," — rather spreading and shoaling than contracting and deepening at the fall. In a small brook like this, there are many adjuncts to increase the variety which are wanting in a river, or, if present, cannot be attended to; even dead leaves and twigs vary the ripplings and increase the foam. And the very lichens on the rocks of the run are an important ornament, which in the great waterfall are wont to be overlooked. I enjoy this little fall on Saw Mill Run more than many a large one on a river that I have seen. The hornbeams and witch-hazel and canoe birches all come in for their share of

attention. We get such a complete idea of the small rill with its overhanging shrubs as only a bird's-eye view from some eminence could give us of the larger stream. Perhaps it does not fall more than five feet within a rod and a half. I should not hear Niagara a short distance off. The never-ending refreshing sound! It suggests more thoughts than Montmorenci. A stream and fall which the woods imbosom. They are not in this proportion to a larger fall. They lie in a more glaring and less picturesque light. Even the bubbles are a study. It can be completely examined in its details. The consciousness of there being water about you at different levels is agreeable. The sun can break through and fall on it and vary the whole scene infinitely.

Saw the freshly (?) broken shells of a tortoise's eggs — or were they a snake's? — in Hosmer's field. I hear a robin singing in the woods south of Hosmer's, just before sunset. It is a sound associated with New England village life. It brings to my thoughts summer evenings when the children are playing in the yards before the doors and their parents conversing at the open windows. It foretells all this now, before those summer hours are come.

As I come over the Turnpike, the song sparrow's jingle comes up from every part of the meadow, as native as the tinkling rills or the blossoms of the spirea, the meadow-sweet, soon to spring. Its cheep is like the sound of opening buds. The sparrow is continually singing on the alders along the brook-side, while the sun is continually setting.

We have had a good solid winter, which has put the

previous summer far behind us; intense cold, deep and lasting snows, and clear, tense winter sky. It is a good experience to have gone through with.

April 2. 6 A. M. — To the riverside and Merrick's pasture.

The sun is up. The water on the meadows is perfectly smooth and placid, reflecting the hills and clouds and trees. The air is full of the notes of birds, — song sparrows, red-wings, robins (singing a strain), bluebirds, — and I hear also a lark, — as if all the earth had burst forth into song. The influence of this April morning has reached them, for they live out-of-doors all the night, and there is no danger that they will oversleep themselves such a morning. A few weeks ago, before the birds had come, there came to my mind in the night the twittering sound of birds in the early dawn of a spring morning, a semiprophecy of it, and last night I attended mentally as if I heard the spray-like dreaming sound of the midsummer frog and realized how glorious and full of revelations it was. Expectation may amount to prophecy. The clouds are *white* watery, not such as we had in the winter. I see in this fresh morning the shells left by the muskrats along the shore, and their galleries leading into the meadow, and the bright-red cranberries washed up along the shore in the old water-mark. Suddenly there is a blur on the placid surface of the waters, a rippling mistiness produced, as it were, by a slight morning breeze, and I should be sorry to show it to the stranger now. So is it with our minds.

As a fair day is promised, and the waters are falling, decide to go to the Sudbury meadows with C., 9 A. M. Started some woodcocks in a wet place in Hi Wheeler's stubble-field. Saw six spotted tortoises (*Emys guttata*), which had crawled to the shore by the side of the Hubbard Bridge causeway. Too late now for the morning influence and inspiration. The birds sing not so earnestly and joyously; there is a blurring ripple on the surface of the lake. How few valuable observations can we make in youth! What if there were united the susceptibility of youth with the discrimination of age? Once I was part and parcel of Nature; now I am observant of her.

What ails the pewee's tail? It is loosely hung, pulsating with life. What mean these wag-tail birds? Cats and dogs, too, express some of their life through their tails.

The bridges are a station at this season. They are the most advantageous positions. There I would take up my stand morning and evening, looking over the water.

The Charles Miles Run full and rumbling. The water is the color of ale, here dark-red ale over the yellow sand, there yellowish frothy ale where it tumbles down. Its foam, composed of large white bubbles, makes a kind of arch over the rill, snow white and contrasting with the general color of the stream, while the latter ever runs under it carrying the lower bubbles with it and new ones ever supply their places. At least eighteen inches high, this stationary arch. I do not remember elsewhere such highly colored water. It drains a

swamp near by and is dry the greater part of the year. Coarse bubbles continually bursting. A striped snake by the spring, and a black one. The grass there is delightfully green while there is no fresh green anywhere else to be seen. It is the most refreshing of all colors. It is what all the meadows will soon be. The color of no flower is so grateful to the eye. Why is the dog black and the grass green? If all the banks were suddenly painted green and spotted with yellow, white, red, blue, purple, etc., we should more fully realize the miracle of the summer's coloring.

Now the snow is off, it is pleasant to visit the sandy bean-fields covered with last year's blue-curls and sorrel and the flakes of arrowhead stone. I love these sandy fields which melt the snows and yield but small crops to the farmer. Saw a striped squirrel in the wall near Lee's. Brigham, the wheelwright, building a boat. At the sight of all this water, men build boats if ever. Are those large scarred roots at the bottom of the brooks now, three inches in diameter, the roots of the pickerel-weed? What vigor! What vitality! The yellow spots of the tortoise (*Emys guttata*) on his dark shell, seen bright through clear water, remind me of flowers, the houstonias, etc., when there are no colors on the land.

Israel Rice's dog stood stock-still so long that I took him at a distance for the end of a bench. He looked much like a fox, and his fur was as soft. Rice was very ready to go with us to his boat, which we borrowed, as soon as he had driven his cow into the barn where her calf was, but she preferred to stay out in the yard

this pleasant morning. He was very obliging, persisted, without regard to our suggestions that we could help ourselves, in going with us to his boat, showed us after a larger boat and made no remark on the miserableness of it. Thanks and compliments fell off him like water off a rock. If the king of the French should send him a medal, he would have to look in many dictionaries to know what the sending of a medal meant, and then he would appreciate the abstract fact merely, and it would fail of its intended effect.

Steered across for the oaks opposite the mouth of the Pantry. For a long distance, as we paddle up the river, we hear the two-stanza'd lay of the pewee on the shore, — pee-wet, pee-wee, etc. Those are the two obvious facts to eye and ear, the river and the pewee. After coming in sight of Sherman's Bridge, we moored our boat by sitting on a maple twig on the east side, to take a leisurely view of the meadow. The eastern shore here is a fair specimen of New England fields and hills, sandy and barren but agreeable to my eye, covered with withered grass on their rounded slopes and crowned with low reddish bushes, shrub oaks. There is a picturesque group of eight oaks near the shore, and through a thin fringe of wood I see some boys driving home an ox-cartload of hay. I have noticed black oaks within a day or two still covered with oak-balls. In upsetting the boat, which has been newly tarred, I have got some tar on my hands, which imparts to them on the whole an agreeable fragrance. This exercise of the arms and chest after a long winter's stagnation, during which only the legs have la-

bored, this pumping off the Lincolnshire fens, the Haarlem lakes, of wintry fumes and damps and foul blood, is perhaps the greatest value of these paddling excursions. I see, far in the south, the upright black piers of the bridge just rising above the water. They are more conspicuous than the sleepers and rails. The occasional patches of snow on the hillsides are unusually bright by contrast; they are landmarks to steer by.

It appears to me that, to one standing on the heights of philosophy, mankind and the works of man will have sunk out of sight altogether; that man is altogether too much insisted on. The poet says the proper study of mankind is man. I say, study to forget all that; take wider views of the universe. That is the egotism of the race. What is this our childish, gossiping, social literature, mainly in the hands of the publishers? When another poet says the world is too much with us, he means, of course, that man is too much with us. In the promulgated views of man, in institutions, in the common sense, there is narrowness and delusion. It is our weakness that so exaggerates the virtues of philanthropy and charity and makes it the highest human attribute. The world will sooner or later tire of philanthropy and all religions based on it mainly. They cannot long sustain my spirit. In order to avoid delusions, I would fain let man go by and behold a universe in which man is but as a grain of sand. I am sure that those of my thoughts which consist, or are contemporaneous, with social personal connections, however humane, are not the wisest and widest, most universal. What is the village, city, State,

nation, aye the civilized world, that it should concern a man so much? the thought of them affects me in my wisest hours as when I pass a woodchuck's hole. It is a comfortable place to nestle, no doubt, and we have friends, some sympathizing ones, it may be, and a hearth, there; but I have only to get up at midnight, aye to soar or wander a little in my thought by day, to find them all slumbering. Look at our literature. What a poor, puny, social thing, seeking sympathy! The author troubles himself about his readers, — would fain have one before he dies. He stands too near his printer; he corrects the proofs. Not satisfied with defiling one another in this world, we would all go to heaven together. To be a good man, that is, a good neighbor in the widest sense, is but little more than to be a good citizen. Mankind is a gigantic institution; it is a community to which most men belong. It is a test I would apply to my companion, — can he forget man? can he see this world slumbering?

I do not value any view of the universe into which man and the institutions of man enter very largely and absorb much of the attention. Man is but the place where I stand, and the prospect hence is infinite. It is not a chamber of mirrors which reflect me. When I reflect, I find that there is other than me. Man is a past phenomenon to philosophy. The universe is larger than enough for man's abode. Some rarely go outdoors, most are always at home at night, very few indeed have stayed out all night once in their lives, fewer still have gone behind the world of humanity, seen its institutions like toadstools by the wayside.

Landed on Tall's Island. It is not cold or windy enough, perchance, for the meadow to make its most serious impression. The staddles, from which the hay has been removed, rise a foot or two above the water. Large white gulls are circling over the water. The shore of this meadow lake is quite wild, and in most places low and rather inaccessible to walkers. On the rocky point of this island, where the wind is felt, the waves are breaking merrily, and now for half an hour our dog has been standing in the water under the small swamp white oaks, and ceaselessly snapping at each wave as it broke, as if it were a living creature. He, regardless of cold and wet, thrusts his head into each wave to gripe it. A dog snapping at the waves as they break on a rocky shore. He then rolls himself in the leaves for a napkin. We hardly set out to return, when the water looked sober and rainy. There was more appearance of rain in the water than in the sky, — April weather look. And soon we saw the dimples of drops on the surface. I forgot to mention before the cranberries seen on the bottom, as we pushed over the meadows, and the red beds of pitcher-plants.

We landed near a corn-field in the bay on the west side, below Sherman's Bridge, in order to ascend Round Hill, it still raining gently or with drops far apart. From the top we see smoke rising from the green pine hill in the southern part of Lincoln. The steam of the engine looked very white this morning against the oak-clad hillsides. The clouds, the showers, and the breaking away now in the west, all belong to the summer side of the year and remind me of long-past

days. The prospect is often best from two thirds the way up a hill, where, looking directly down at the parts of the landscape — the fields and barns — nearest the base, you get the sense of height best, and see how the land slopes up to where you stand. From the top, commonly, you overlook all this, and get a sense of *distance* merely, with a break in the landscape by which the most interesting point is concealed. This hill with its adjuncts is now almost an island, surrounded by broad lakes. The south lakes reflect the most light at present, but the sober surface of the northern is yet more interesting to me.

How novel and original must be each new man's view of the universe! for though the world is so old, and so many books have been written, each object appears wholly undescribed to our experience, each field of thought wholly unexplored. The whole world is an America, a *New World*. The fathers lived in a dark age and throw no light on any of our subjects. The sun climbs to the zenith daily, high over all literature and science. Astronomy, even, concerns us worldlings only, but the sun of poetry and of each new child born into the planet has never been astronomized, nor brought nearer by a telescope. So it will be to the end of time. The end of the world is not yet. Science is young by the ruins of Luxor, unearthing the Sphinx, or Nineveh, or between the Pyramids. The parts of the meadows nearly surrounded by water form interesting peninsulas and promontories.

Return to our boat. We have to go ashore and upset it every half-hour, it leaks so fast, for the leak in-

creases as it sinks in the water in geometrical progression. I see, among the phenomena of spring, here and there a dead sucker floating on the surface, perhaps dropped by a fish hawk or a gull, for the gulls are circling this way overhead to reconnoitre us. They will come sailing overhead to observe us. On making the eastward curve in the river, we find a strong wind against us. Pushing slowly across the meadow in front of the Pantry, the waves beat against the bows and sprinkle the water half the length of the boat. The froth is in long white streaks before the wind, as usual striping the surface.

We land in a steady rain and walk inland by R. Rice's barn, regardless of the storm, toward White Pond. Overtaken by an Irishman in search of work. Discovered some new oaks and pine groves and more New England fields. At last the drops fall wider apart, and we pause in a sandy field near the Great Road of the Corner, where it was agreeably retired and sandy, drinking up the rain. The rain was soothing, so still and sober, gently beating against and amusing our thoughts, swelling the brooks. The robin now peeps with scared note in the heavy overcast air, among the apple trees. The hour is favorable to thought. Such a day I like a sandy road, snows that melt and leave bare the corn and grain fields, with Indian relics shining on them, and prepare the ground for the farmer. Saw a cow or ox in a hollow in the woods, which had been skinned and looked red and striped, like those Italian anatomical preparations. It scared the dog. Went through a reddish andromeda swamp, where still a little icy stiffness in the crust under the woods

keeps us from slumping. The rain now turns to snow with large flakes, so soft many cohere in the air as they fall. They make us white as millers and wet us through, yet it is clear gain. I hear a solitary hyla for the first time. At Hubbard's Bridge, count eight ducks going over. Had seen one with outstretched neck over the Great Meadows in Sudbury. Looking up, the flakes are black against the sky. And now the ground begins to whiten. Get home at 5.30 P. M.

At the bend of the river above the river [*sic*], I noticed many ferns on the bank where there was much snow, very green.

April 3. They call that northernmost sea, thought to be free from ice, "Polina," — whither the musk oxen migrate. The coldest natures, persevere with them, go far enough, are found to have open sea in the highest latitudes.

It is a clear day with a cold westerly wind, the snow of yesterday being melted. When the sun shines unobstructedly the landscape is full of light, for it is reflected from the withered fawn-colored grass, as it cannot be from the green grass of summer. (On the back of the hill behind Gourgas's.)

The bluebird carries the sky on his back.

I am going over the hills in the rear of the windmill site and along Peter's path. This path through the rolling stubble-fields, with the woods rather distant and the horizon distant in front on account of the intervention of the river and meadow, reminds me a little of the downs of Cape Cod, of the Plains of Nau-

set. This is the only walk of the kind that we have in Concord. Perhaps it should be called Cæsar's Path. The maple at the brook by this path has not expanded its buds, though that by the Red Bridge had so long ago. What the cause? Are they different species?

I have observed much snow lately on the north slopes where shrub oaks grow, where probably the ground is frozen, more snow, I think, than lies in the woods in such positions. It is even two or three feet deep in many such places, though few villagers would believe it. One side of the village street, which runs east and west, appears a month in advance of the other. I go down the street on the wintry side; I return through summer. How agreeable the contrasts of light and shade, especially when the successive swells of a hillside produce the shade! The clouds are important to-day for their shadows. If it were not for them, the landscape would be one glare of light without variety. By their motion they still more vary the scene.

Man's eye is so placed as to look straight forward on a level best, or rather down than up. His eye demands the sober colors of the earth for its daily diet. He does not look up at a great angle but with an effort. Many clouds go over without our noticing them, for it would not profit us much to notice it, but few cattle pass by in the street or the field without our knowing it.

The moon appears to be full to-night. About 8.30 P. M. I walked to the Clamshell Hill. It is very cold and windy, and I miss my gloves, left at home. Colder than the last moon. The sky is two-thirds covered with great four or more sided downy clouds, drifting

from the north or northwest, with dark-blue partitions between them. The moon, with a small brassy halo, seems travelling ever through them toward the north. The water is dull and dark, except close to the windward shore, where there is a smooth strip a rod or more in width protected from the wind, which reflects a faint light. When the moon reaches a clear space, the water is suddenly lit up quite across the meadows, for half a mile in length and several rods in width, while the woods beyond are thrown more into the shade, or seen more in a mass and indistinctly, than before. The ripples on the river, seen in the moonlight, those between the sunken willow lines, have this form: the arc of a circle, as if their extremities were retarded by the friction of the banks. I noticed this afternoon that bank below Cæsar's, now partially flooded, higher than the neighboring meadow, so that sometimes you can walk down on it a mile dry-shod with water on both sides of you. Like the banks of the Mississippi. There always appears to be something phosphorescent in moonlight reflected from water. Venus is very bright now in the west, and Orion is there, too, now. I came out mainly to see the light of the moon reflected from the meadowy flood. It is a pathway of light, of sheeny ripples, extending across the meadow toward the moon, consisting of a myriad little bent and broken moons. I hear one faint peep from a bird on its roost. The clouds are travelling very fast into the south. I would not have believed the heavens could be cleared so soon. They consist of irregularly

margined, wide whitish bars, *apparently* converging, rendezvousing, toward one point far in the south horizon. Like the columns of a host in the sky, each being conducted by its own leader to one rendezvous in the southern heavens. Such is the illusion, for we are deceived when we look up at this concave sphere, as when we look on a plane map representing the convex globe, — not by Mercator's projection. But what a grand incident of the night — though hardly a night passes without many such — that, between the hours of nine and ten, a battalion of downy clouds many miles in length and several in width were observed sailing noiselessly like a fleet from north to south over land and water, town and cottage, at the height of half a dozen miles above the earth! Over woods and over villages they swept along, intercepting the light of the moon, and yet perchance no man observed them. Now they are all gone. The sky is left clear and cold and but thinly peopled at this season. It is of a very light blue in all the horizon, but darker in the zenith, darkest of all in the crevice between two downy clouds. It is particularly light in the western horizon. Who knows but light is reflected from snow lying on the ground further inland? The water, as I look at it in the north or northeast, is a very dark blue, the moon being on my right; afterwards, crossing the railroad bridge, is a deep sea-green. The evenings are now much shortened, suggesting that ours is to be henceforth a daylight life.

April 4. *Sunday.* I have got to that pass with my friend that our words do not pass with each other for

what they are worth. We speak in vain; there is none to hear. He finds fault with me that I walk alone, when I pine for want of a companion; that I commit my thoughts to a diary even on my walks, instead of seeking to share them generously with a friend; curses my practice even. Awful as it is to contemplate, I pray that, if I am the cold intellectual skeptic whom he rebukes, his curse may take effect, and wither and dry up those sources of my life, and my journal no longer yield me pleasure nor life.

P. M. — Going across Wheeler's large field beyond Potter's, saw a large flock of small birds go by, I am not sure what kind, the near ones continually overtaking the foremost, so that the whole flock appeared to roll over as it went forward. When they lit on a tree, they appeared at a distance to clothe it like dead leaves. Went round Bear Garden Hill to the bank of the river. I am interested by the line of deposits which form the high-water mark. If you were to examine a bushel of it, how much you might learn of the productions of the shores above. I notice that the highest and driest lines, some months old, are composed mainly of sticks and coarse stems of plants; the most recent, which the water has but just left, have a large proportion of leaves, having been formed since the March winds have blown off so many dry leaves. So you can tell the season of the year when it was formed. It makes a manure in which the grass, etc., springs earlier and more luxuriantly than elsewhere. The water has plainly stood comparatively still at a few levels, for there are but two or three lines of deposit or drift. So that in this

respect, too, nature is self-registering. Is it the columbine or the anemone leaf that I now see grown a few inches among the rocks under the Cliffs?

It is refreshing to stand on the face of the Cliff and see the water gliding over the surface of the almost perpendicular rock in a broad thin sheet, pulsing over it. It reflects the sun for half a mile like a patch of snow, — as you stand close by, bringing out the colors of the lichens like polishing or varnish. It is admirable, regarded as a dripping fountain. You have lichens and moss on the surface, and starting saxifrage, ferns still green, and huckleberry bushes in the crevices. The rocks never appear so diversified, and cracked, as if the chemistry of nature were now in full force. Then the drops, falling perpendicularly from a projecting rock, have a pleasing geometrical effect.

I see the snow lying thick on the south side of the Peterboro Hills, and though the ground is bare from the seashore to their base, I presume it is covered with snow from their base to the Icy Sea. I feel the northwest air cooled by the snow on my cheek. Those hills are probably the dividing line at present between the bare ground and the snow-clad ground stretching three thousand miles to the Saskatchewan and Mackenzie and the Icy Sea.

The shrub oaks on the plateau below the Cliffs have now lost so many of their leaves that I see much more of the grass ground between them. I see the old circular shore of Fair Haven, where the tops of the button-bushes, willows, etc., rise above the water. This pond

is now open; only a little ice against the Pleasant Meadow. There are three great gulls sailing in the middle. Now my shouting (perchance) raises one, and, flying low and heavily over the water, with heavy shoulders and sharp beak, it utters its loud mewing or squeaking notes, some of them like a squeaking pump-handle, which sound very strange to our woods. It gives a different character to the pond. To the south of the Island there is a triangular strip of smooth water many rods wide in its lee, contrasting with the waved surface elsewhere. No obvious signs of spring as yet except in the buds of a few trees and the slight greenness of the grass in some places.

April 6. Last night a snow-storm, and this morning we find the ground covered again six or eight inches deep — and drifted pretty badly beside. The conductor in the cars, which have been detained more than an hour, says it is a dry snow up-country. Here it is very damp.

April 8. To-day I hear the croak of frogs in small pond-holes in the woods, and see dimples on the surface, which I suppose that they make, for when I approach they are silent and the dimples are no longer seen. They are very shy. I notice the alder, the *A. serrulata*,[1] in blossom, its reddish-brown catkins now lengthened and loose. What mean the apparently younger small red (catkins?)?[2]

[1] [The name is queried in pencil.]

[2] *They* are the female aments.

I see a light, of fishermen, I suppose, spearing to-night on the river, though half the ground is covered with snow.

April 9. I frequently detect the Canadian in New England by his coarse gray homespun capote, with a picturesque red sash round his waist, and his well-furred cap made to protect his ears and face against the severities of his winter.[1] Observe the *Alnus incana*, which is distinguished from the common by the whole branchlet hanging down, so that the sterile aments not only are but appear terminal, and by the brilliant polished reddish green of the bark, and by the leaves. The snow now disappearing, I observe the Mill Brook suddenly inclosed between two lines of green. Some kind of grass rises above the surface in deep water, like two faint lines of green drawn with a brush, betraying the sun's chemistry. Perhaps three days ago it was not. Answering to the dotted lines.

Went into the old Hunt house, which they said Uncle Abel said was built one hundred and fifty years ago. The second story projects five or six inches over the first, the garret a foot over the second at the gables. There are two large rooms, one above the other, though the walls are low. The fireplace in the lower room rather large, with a high shelf of wood painted or stained to represent mahogany. That whole side the room panelled. The main timbers about fifteen inches square, of pine or oak, and for the most part the frame

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 45; Riv. 55.]

exposed. Where cased, in the best rooms, sixteen inches or more in width. The sills of the house appearing in the lower rooms all round the house, and cased, making a low shelf to put your feet on. No weather-boards on the corners outside; the raw edges of the clapboards.

The maple by the bridge in bloom.

April 10. 8 A. M. — Down river to half a mile below Carlisle Bridge, the river being high, yet not high for the spring.

Saw and heard the white-bellied swallows this morning for the first time. Took boat at Stedman Buttrick's, a gunner's boat, smelling of muskrats and provided with slats for bushing the boat. Having got into the Great Meadows, after grounding once or twice on low spits of grass ground, we begin to see ducks which we have scared, flying low over the water, always with a striking parallelism in the direction of their flight. They fly like regulars. They are like rolling-pins with wings. A few gulls, sailing like hawks, seen against the woods; crows; white-bellied swallows even here, already, which, I suppose, proves that their insect food is in the air. The water on our left, *i. e.* the northwest, is now dark; on our right, has a silvery brightness on the summits of the waves, scarcely yellowish. Waves here do not break. Ducks most commonly seen flying by twos or threes.

From Ball's Hill the Great Meadow looks more light; perhaps it is the medium between the dark and light above mentioned. (*Mem.* Try this experiment again; *i. e.* look not toward nor from the sun but athwart

this line.) Seen from this hill in this direction, there are, here and there, dark shadows spreading rapidly over the surface, where the wind strikes the water. The water toward the sun, seen from this height, shows not the broad silvery light but a myriad fine sparkles. The sky is full of light this morning, with different shades of blue, lighter below, darker above, separated perhaps by a thin strip of white vapor; thicker in the east. The first painted tortoise (*Emys picta*) at the bottom on the meadow. Look now toward Carlisle Bridge. See ahead the waves running higher in the middle of the meadow, and here they get the full sweep of the wind and they break into whitecaps; but we, yet in the lee of the land, feel only the long smooth swells, as the day after a storm. It is pleasant, now that we are in the wind, to feel [*sic*] the chopping sound when the boat seems to fall upon the successive waves which it meets at right angles or in the eye of the wind. Why are some maples now in blossom so much redder than others? I have seen, then, the maples and the alders in blossom, but not yet the maple keys.

From Carlisle Bridge we saw many ducks a quarter of a mile or more northward, black objects on the water, and heard them laugh something like a loon. Might have got near enough to shoot them. A fine sight to see them rise at last, about fifty of them, apparently black ducks. While they float on the water they appear to preserve constantly their relative distance. Their note not exactly like that of a goose, yet resembling some domestic fowl's cry, you know not what one; like a new species of goose. See very red

cranberry vines now budded. The now brownish-red shrub growing everywhere in and about bogs (originally green), with fine-dotted leaf, is probably the dwarf andromeda.[1]

When we go ashore and ramble inland below Carlisle Bridge, find here and there the freshly cut woodpiles which the choppers have not yet carted off, the ground strewn with chips. A field lately cleared (last fall perhaps), with charred stumps, and grain now greening the sandy and uneven soil, reminds me agreeably of a new country. Found a large bed of *Arbutus Uva-Ursi with fruit* in Carlisle half a mile below bridge. Some of the berries were turned black, as well as the berried stems and leaves next the ground at bottom of the thick beds, — an inky black. This vine red in the sunniest places. Never saw its fruit in this neighborhood before. As we ate our luncheon on the peninsula off Carlisle shore, saw a large ring round the sun. The aspect of the sky varies every hour. About noon I observed it in the south, composed of short clouds horizontal and parallel to one another, each straight and dark below with a slight cumulus resting on it, a little marsh-wise; again, in the north, I see a light but rather watery-looking flock of clouds; at mid-afternoon, slight wisps and thin veils of whitish clouds also. This meadow is about two miles long at one view from Carlisle Bridge southward, appearing to wash the base of Pine Hill,[2] and it is about as much longer northward

[1] *Vide* April 15.

[2] Can it be the hill near C. Smith's?

and from a third to a half a mile wide. We sailed this whole distance with two or three pitch pine boughs for a sail, though we made leeway the whole width of the meadow. If the bridge and its causeway were gone, there would not be so long a reach to my knowledge on this river. There is a large swamp on the east above the bridge, maples and birches in front, with pines in the rear, making a low, wild shore, the shore opening farther south to one or two solitary farmhouses; on the west, low hills covered with woods, but no house. The young trees and bushes, now making apparent islands on the meadows, are there nearly in this proportion, I should think; *i. e.* in deep water, young maples, willows, button-bushes, red osier; where less water, alder, sweet-gale, and dwarf (?) andromeda, etc.

We lay to in the lee of an island a little north of the bridge, where the surface is quite smooth, and the woods shelter us completely, while we hear the roar of the wind behind them, with an agreeable sense of protection, and see the white caps of the waves on either side. When there is a ripple merely in our calm port, we see the sunny reflections of the waves on the bottom, and the cranberries, etc. It is warm here in the sun, and the dog is drying his wet coat after so many voyages, and is drowsily nodding.

April 11. 2.30 P. M. — To Second Division Brook.

The ground is now for the most part bare, though I went through drifts three feet deep in some places. I hear that Simmonds had planted his potatoes (! !)

before the snow a week ago. As I go over the railroad bridge, I hear the pewee singing *pewet pewee, pee-wet pee-wee.* The last time rising on the last syllable, sometimes repeating it thus many times, *pe-wee.* The maple beyond the railroad bridge is not yet in blossom, though that at the Red Bridge is.[1]

The sight of Nut Meadow Brook in Brown's land reminds me that the attractiveness of a brook depends much on the character of its bottom. I love just now to see one flowing through soft sand like this, where it wears a deep but irregular channel, now wider and shallower with distinct ripple-marks, now shelving off suddenly to indistinct depths, meandering as much up and down as from side to side, deepest where narrowest, and ever gullying under this bank or that, its bottom lifted up to one side or the other, the current inclining to one side. I stop to look at the circular shadows of the dimples over the yellow sand, and the dark-brown clams on their edges in the sand at the bottom. (I hear the sound of the piano below as I write this, and feel as if the winter in me were at length beginning to thaw, for my spring has been even more backward than nature's. For a month past life has been a thing incredible to me. None but the kind gods can make me sane. If only they will let their south winds blow on me! I ask to be melted. You can only ask of the metals that they be tender to the fire that *melts* them. To naught else can they be tender.) The sweet flags are now starting up under water two inches high, and minnows dart. A pure brook is a very beau-

[1] Different species.

tiful object to study minutely. It will bear the closest inspection, even to the fine air-bubbles, like minute globules of quicksilver, that lie on its bottom. The minute particles or spangles of golden mica in these sands, when the sun shines on them, remind one of the golden sands we read of. Everything is washed clean and bright, and the water is the best glass through which to see it.

I asked W. E. C. yesterday if he had acquired fame. He answered that, giving his name at some place, the bystanders said: "Yes, sir, we have heard of you. We know you here, sir. Your name is mentioned in Mr. ——'s book." That 's all the fame I have had, — to be made known by another man.

Great flocks of slate-colored snowbirds still about and uttering their jingling note in the sun. In the brook behind Jenny Dugan's I was pleased to find the *Alnus incana* (?) in bloom in the water, its long sterile aments, yellowish-brown, hanging in panicles or clusters at the ends of the drooping branchlets, while all the twigs else are bare and the well-cased and handsome leaf-buds are not yet expanded at all. It is a kind of resurrection of the year, these pliant and pendulous blossoms on this apparently dead bush, while all is sere and tawny around, withered and bleached grass. A sort of harbinger of spring, this and the maple blossoms especially, and also the early willow catkins. Even these humble and inconspicuous aments are as grateful now as the most beautiful flowers will be a month hence. They are two and a half inches long and more. This appears to be more forward, and the

aments larger, than what I take to be the common alder hereabouts. This and the maple and the earliest willow are the most flower-like now. The skunk-cabbage is not yet fairly in blossom, nor the mayflower. In all the brooks I see the spotted tortoise (*Emys guttata*) now, and in some fields and on some hillsides have seen holes apparently dug by turtles, but I have not yet noticed their tracks over the sand. The neat compact catkins of the hazel, — fawn-colored? The birches still rather hard.

If I am too cold for human friendship, I trust I shall not soon be too cold for natural influences. It appears to be a law that you cannot have a deep sympathy with both man and nature. Those qualities which bring you near to the one estrange you from the other.

Second Division Brook. — This is of similar character, but deeper than Nut Meadow Brook. It is pleasant that there be on a brook the remains of an old flume or dam or causeway, as here, overgrown with trees, and whose rocks make stepping-stones. Large skaters and small black water-bugs are out now on the surface. Now, then, migrating fishes may come up the streams. The expanding mayflower buds show a little pinkish tint under the snow. The cress is apparently all last year's. The cowslip does not yet spring. Very little change in anything since I was last here. Is that the *Viburnum Lentago* with the spear-shaped buds? They have cut down the black aspens that used to stand on the White Pond road, the Dantean trees. Thought I heard a snipe or

an owl. White Pond about a fourth or a fifth open at the north end. A man who passed Walden to-day says it is melted two rods wide on north side. Here are large flocks of *Fringilla hyemalis* in the stubble.

Every man will be a poet if he can; otherwise a philosopher or man of science. This proves the superiority of the poet.

It is hard for a man to take money from his friends, or any service. This suggests how all men should be related.

Ah! when a man has travelled, and robbed the horizon of his native fields of its mystery and poetry, its indefinite promise, tarnished the blue of distant mountains with his feet!! When he has done this he may begin to think of another world. What is this longer to him?

I see now the mosses in pastures, bearing their light-colored capsules on the top of red filaments. When I reach the bridge, it is become a serene evening; the broad waters are more and more smooth, and everything is more beautiful in the still light. The view toward Fair Haven, whose woods are now cut off, is beautiful. No obvious sign of spring. The hill now dimly reflected; the air not yet quite still. The wood on Conantum abuts handsomely on the water and can ill be spared. The ground on which it stands is not level as seen from this point, but pleasantly varied and swelling, which is important. (Before my neighbor's pig is cold his boys have made a football of his bladder! So goes the world. No matter how much the boy snivels at first, he kicks the bladder with ecstasy.) This is the

still evening hour. Insects in the air. The blackbirds whistle and sing *conqueree;* the robin peeps and sings; the bluebird warbles. The light of the setting sun on the pitch pines on Fair Haven and Bear Hill lights them up warmly, for the rays fall horizontally on them through the *mellow* evening atmosphere. They do not appear so bright to us at noon, nor do they now to the hawk that comes soaring sluggishly over them, — the brown and dusky bird seen even from beneath. Of course the pines seen from above have now more of the evening shades in them than seen from the earth on one side. The catkins of the willow are silvery. The shadow of the wood named above at the river end is indispensable in this scene; and, what is remarkable, I see where it has reached across the river and is creeping up the hill with dark pointed spears, though the intermediate river is all sunny, the reflection of the sunny hill covered with withered grass being seen through the invisible shadow. A river is best seen breaking through highlands, issuing from some narrow pass. It imparts a sense of power. The shadow at the end of the wood makes it appear grander in this case. The serenity and warmth are the main thing after the windy and cool days we have had. You may even hear a fish leap in the water now. The lowing of a cow advances me many weeks towards summer. The reflections grow more distinct every moment. At last the outline of the hill is as distinct below as above. And every object appears rhymed by reflection. By partly closing my eyes and looking through my eyelashes, the wood end appears thus:—

Now the shadow, reaching across the river, has crept so far up the hill that I see its reflection on the hillside in the water, and in this way it may at length connect itself with its source. Clouds are now distinctly seen in the water. The bridge is now a station for walkers. I parted with my companion here; told him not to wait for me. Maple in the swamp answers to maple, birch to birch. There is one clump of three birches particularly picturesque. In a few minutes the wind has thus gone down. At this season the

reflections of deciduous trees are more picturesque and remarkable than when they are in leaf, because, the branches being seen, they make with their reflections a more wonderful rhyme. It is not mere mass or outline corresponding to outline, but a kind of geometrical figure. The maples look thus: The twilight must to the

extent above mentioned be earlier to birds soaring in the sky; *i. e.* they see more decided shades of evening than a man looking east. The frogs peep thinly.

My nature may be as still as this water, but it is not so pure, and its reflections are not so distinct. The snow has turned yellow the opening leaves of the nuphar. The song of a robin on an oak in Hubbard's Grove sounds far off. So I have heard a robin within three feet in a cage in a dark barroom (how unstained by all the filth of that place?) with a kind of ventriloquism, so singing that his song sounded far off on the elms. It was more pathetic still for this. The robins are singing now on all hands while the sun is setting. At what an expense any valuable work is performed! At the expense of a life! If you do one thing well, what else are you good for in the meanwhile?

April 12. Gilpin says that our turkey was domesticated in Windsor Forest at one time, and from its size was an object of consequence to lovers of the picturesque, as most birds are not, and, in its form and color and actions, more picturesque than the peacock or indeed any other bird. Being recently reclaimed from the woods, its habits continue wilder than those of other domestic fowls. "It strays widely for its food, it flies well considering its apparent inactivity, and it perches and roosts on trees." He says of the leaf of the beech: "On handling, it feels as if it were fabricated with metallic rigor. . . . For this reason, I suppose, as its rigor gives it an elastic quality, the common people in France and Switzerland use it for their beds."

I have heard thus far two sounds from two kinds of frogs, I suppose, the hyla's peep and a rather faint croak in pond-holes.

2 P. M. — To the powder-mills *via* Harrington's, returning by railroad.

The road through the pitch pine woods beyond J. Hosmer's is very pleasant to me, curving under the pines, without a fence, — the sandy road, with the pines close abutting on it, yellow in the sun and low-branched, with younger pines filling up all to the ground. I love to see a sandy road like this curving through a pitch pine wood where the trees closely border it without fences, a great cart-path merely. That is a pleasant part of the North River, under the black birches. The dog does not hesitate to take to the water for a stick, but the current carries him rapidly down. The lines of sawdust left at different levels on the shore is just hint enough of a sawmill on the stream above.

Saw the first blossoms (bright-yellow stamens or pistils) on the willow catkins to-day. The speckled alders and the maples are earlier then. The yellow blossom appears first on one side of the ament and is the most of bright and sunny color the spring has shown, the most decidedly flower-like that I have seen. It flowers, then, I should say, without regard to the skunk-cabbage, *q. v.* First the speckled alder, then the maple without keys, then this earliest, perhaps swamp, willow with its bright-yellow blossoms on one side of the ament. It is fit that this almost earliest spring flower should be yellow, the color of the sun.

Saw a maple in the water with yellowish flowers. Is it the water brings them forward? But I believe that these are all the barren flowers, and the perfect flowers appear afterward.

When I look closely, I perceive the sward beginning to be green under my feet, very slightly. It rains with sleet and hail, yet not enough to color the ground. At this season I can walk in the fields without wetting my feet in grass. Observed in the stonework of the railroad bridge — I think it must be in Acton — many large stones more or less disintegrated and even turned to a soft soil into which I could thrust my finger, threatening the destruction of the bridge. A geologist is needed to tell you whether your stones will continue stones and not turn to earth. It was very pleasant to come out on the railroad in this gentle rain. The track, laid in gray sand, looks best at such a time, with the rails all wet. The factory bridge, seen through the mist, is agreeably indistinct, seen against a dark-grayish pine wood. I should not know there was a bridge there, if I had not been there. The dark line made by its shaded under side is most that I see here spanning the road; the rails are quite indistinct. We love to see things thus with a certain indistinctness.

I am made somewhat sad this afternoon by the coarseness and vulgarity of my companion, because he is one with whom I have made myself intimate. He inclines latterly to speak with coarse jesting of facts which should always be treated with delicacy and reverence. I lose my respect for the man who can make the mystery of sex the subject of a coarse jest, yet, when you speak

earnestly and seriously on the subject, is silent. I feel that this is to be truly irreligious. Whatever may befall me, I trust that I may never lose my respect for purity in others. The subject of sex is one on which I do not wish to meet a man at all unless I *can* meet him on the most inspiring ground, — if his view degrades, and does not elevate. I would preserve purity in act and thought, as I would cherish the memory of my mother. A companion can possess no worse quality than vulgarity. If I find that *he* is not habitually reverent of the fact of sex, I, even I, will not associate with [him]. I will cast this first stone. What were life without some religion of this kind? Can I walk with one who by his jests and by his habitual tone reduces the life of men and women to a level with that of cats and dogs? The man who uses such a vulgar jest describes his relation to his dearest friend. Impure as I am, I could protect and worship purity. I can have no really serious conversation with my companion. He seems not capable of it. The men whom I most esteem, when they speak at all on this subject, do not speak with sufficient reverence. They speak to men with a coarseness which they would not use in the presence of women, and I think they would feel a slight shame if a woman coming in should hear their remarks. A man's speech on this subject should, of course, be ever as reverent and chaste and simple as if it were to be heard by the ears of maidens.

In the New Forest in Hampshire they had a chief officer called the Lord Warden and under him two distinct officers, one to preserve the *venison* of the forest,

another to preserve its *vert*, *i. e.* woods, lawns, etc. Does not our Walden need such? The Lord Warden was a person of distinction, as the Duke of Gloucester.

Walden Wood was my forest walk.

The English forests are divided into "walks," with a keeper presiding over each. My "walk" is ten miles from my house every way. Gilpin says, "It is a forest adage of ancient date, *Non est inquirendum unde venit venison*," *i. e.* whether stolen or not.

"The incroachments of trespassers, and the houses and fences thus raised on the borders of the forest" by forest borderers, were "considered as great nuisances by the old forest law, and were severely punished under the name of *purprestures*, as tending *ad terrorem ferarum — ad nocumentum forestae*, etc." [1]

There is, this afternoon and evening, a rather cool April rain. Pleasant to hear its steady dripping.

April 13. *Tuesday.* A driving snow-storm in the night and still raging; five or six inches deep on a level at 7 A. M. All birds are turned into snowbirds. Trees and houses have put on the aspect of winter. The traveller's carriage wheels, the farmer's wagon, are converted into white disks of snow through which the spokes hardly appear. But it is good now to stay in the house and read and write. We do not now go wandering all abroad and dissipated, but the imprisoning storm condenses our thoughts. I can hear the clock tick as not in pleasant weather. My life is enriched. I love to hear the wind howl. I have a fancy for sitting

[1] [*Walden*, p. 276; Riv. 387, 388.]

with my book or paper in some mean and apparently unfavorable place, in the kitchen, for instance, where the work is going on, rather a little cold than comfortable. My thoughts are of more worth in such places than they would be in a well furnished and warmed studio.

Windsor, according to Gilpin, is contracted from wind-shore, the Saxons not sounding the *sh*.

The robin is the only bird as yet that makes a business of singing, steadily singing, — sings continuously out of pure joy and melody of soul, carols. The jingle of the song sparrow, simple and sweet as it is, is not of sufficient volume nor sufficiently continuous to command and hold attention, and the bluebird's is but a transient warble, from a throat overflowing with azure and serene hopes; but the song of the robin on the elms or oaks, loud and clear and heard afar through the streets of a village, makes a fit conclusion to a spring day. The larks are not yet in sufficient numbers or sufficiently musical. The robin is the prime singer as yet. The blackbird's *conqueree*, when first heard in the spring, is pleasant from the associations it awakens, and is best heard by one boating on the river. It belongs to the stream. The robin is the only bird with whose song the groves can be said to be now *vocal* morning and evening, for, though many other notes are heard, none fill the air like this bird. As yet no other thrushes.

Snowed all day, till the ground was covered eight inches deep. Heard the robin singing as usual last night, though it was raining. The elm buds begin to

show their blossoms. As I came home through the streets at 11 o'clock last night through the snow, it cheered me to think that there was a little bit of a yellow blossom by warm sandy watersides which had expanded its yellow blossom on the sunny side amid the snows. I mean the catkins of the earliest willow. To think of those little sunny spots in nature, so incredibly contrasting with all this white and cold.

April 14. Going down the railroad at 9 A. M., I hear the lark singing from over the snow. This for steady singing comes next to the robin now. It will come up very sweet from the meadows ere long. I do not hear those peculiar tender die-away notes from the pewee yet. Is it another pewee, or a later note? The snow melts astonishingly fast. The whole upper surface, when you take it up in your hand, is heavy and dark with water. The slate-colored snowbird's (for they are still about) is a somewhat shrill jingle, like the sound of ramrods when the order has been given to a regiment to "return ramrods" and they obey straggglingly. It is oppressively hot in the Deep Cut, the sun is now so high and reflected from the snow on both sides. When I inquire again of Riordan where he gets his water now, seeing that the ditch by the railroad is full of rain-water and sand, he answers cheerfully as ever: "I get it from the ditch, sir. It is good spr-ring water,"—with a good deal of burr to the *r*. Certainly it will not poison him so soon for his contentedness. Walden is only melted two or three rods from the north shore yet. It is a good thermometer of the annual heats,

because, having no outlet nor inlet on the surface, it has no stream to wear it away more or less rapidly or early as the water may be higher or lower, and also, being so deep, it is not warmed through by a transient change of temperature. Is that *Cornus florida* at the Howard's Meadow dam? Many red oak leaves have fallen since yesterday, for now they lie on the surface of the snow, perchance loosened by the moisture. The white oak leaves are more bleached and thinner than the red. The squarish-leaved shrub oak appears to bear the winter still better. The leaves of the hornbeam are well withered. The snow in the sunshine is more white and dazzling now than in the winter; at least this is the effect on our eyes. Haynes told me of breams caught through the ice. The surface of the meadow is very attractive now, seen through a foot or more of calm water while the neighboring fields are covered with snow. The evenings have for a long time been grievously shortened. The pond-holes are filled with snow which looks like ice. With snow on the ground, the sky appears once more to wear the peculiar blue of winter, and contrasts in like manner with small whitish cumulus; but there is not yet in the air the vapor you would expect from the evaporation of so much snow.

On the Cliffs. — If it were not for the snow it would be a remarkably pleasant, as well as warm, day. It is now perfectly calm. The different parts of Fair Haven Pond — the pond, the meadow beyond the button-bush and willow curve, the island, and the meadow between the island and mainland with its own defining lines — are all parted off like the parts of a mirror.

A fish hawk is calmly sailing over all, looking for his prey. The gulls are all gone now, though the water is high, but I can see the motions of a muskrat on the calm sunny surface a great way off. So perfectly calm and beautiful, and yet no man looking at it this morning but myself. It is pleasant to see the zephyrs strike the smooth surface of the pond from time to time, and a darker shade ripple over it.

The streams break up; the ice goes to the sea. Then sails the fish hawk overhead, looking for his prey. I saw the first white-bellied swallows (about the house) on the morning of the 10th, as I have said, and, that day also, I saw them skimming over the Great Meadows, as if they had come to all parts of the town at once.

Can we believe when beholding this landscape, with only a few buds visibly swollen on the trees and the ground covered eight inches deep with snow, that the grain was waving in the fields and the apple trees were in blossom April 19, 1775? It may confirm this story, however, what Grandmother said, — that she carried ripe cherries from Weston to her brother in Concord Jail [1] the 17th of June the same year. It is probably true, what E. Wood, senior, says, that the grain was just beginning to wave, and the apple blossoms beginning to expand.

Abel Hunt tells me to-night that he remembers that the date of the old Hunt house used to be on the chim-

[1] [Mr. Sanborn informs the editors that this Mr. Jones was a Tory, who fled to Halifax and later, in trying to bring in supplies for the British soldiers in Boston during the siege, was captured with his vessel and sent to Concord Jail as prisoner.]

ney, and it was 1703, or 1704, within a year or two; that Governor Winthrop sold the farm to a Hunt, and they have the deed now. There is one of the old-fashioned diamond squares set in lead still, in the back part of the house.

The snow goes off fast, for I hear it melting [?] and the eaves dripping all night as well as all day.

I have been out every afternoon this past winter, as usual, in sun and wind, snow and rain, without being particularly tanned. This *forenoon* I walked in the woods and felt the heat reflected from the snow so sensibly in some parts of the cut on the railroad that I was reminded of those oppressive days two or three summers ago, when the laborers were obliged to work by night. Well, since I have come home, this afternoon and evening, I find that I am suddenly tanned, even to making the skin of my nose sore. The sun, reflected thus from snow in April, perhaps especially in the forenoon, possesses a tanning power.

April 15. My face still burns with yesterday's sunning. It rains this morning, as if the vapor from the melting snow were falling again. There is so much sun and light reflected from the snow at this season that it is not only remarkably white and dazzling but tans in a few moments. It is fortunate, then, that the sun on the approach of the snows, the season of snow, takes his course so many degrees lower in the heavens; else he might burn us up, even at that season. The face comes from the house of winter, tender and white, to the house of summer, and these late snows convey

the sun to it with sudden and scorching power. It was not the March winds or others. It was a still, warm, beautiful day. I was out but three hours. It was the sun suddenly and copiously applied to a face from winter quarters.

The broad flat brown buds on Mr. Cheney's elm, containing twenty or thirty yellowish-green *threads*, surmounted with little brownish-mulberry cups, which contain the stamens and the two styles, — these are just expanding or blossoming now. The flat imbricated buds, which open their scales both ways, have had a rich look for some weeks past. Why so few elms so advanced, so rich now? Are the staminiferous and pistilliferous flowers ever on different trees?

It is, according to Emerson, the dwarf cassandra (*C. calyculata* of D. Don) that is so common on the river meadows and in swamps and bogs; formerly called an andromeda, of the *Ericaceæ*, or Heath Family, with the uva-ursi (*Arctostaphylos*). Now well flower-budded. I had forgotten the aspen in my latest enumeration of flowers. *Vide* if its flowers have not decidedly appeared.

I think that the largest early-catkined willow in large bushes in sand by water now blossoming — the fertile catkins with paler blossoms, the sterile covered with pollen, a pleasant lively bright yellow — [is] the brightest flower I have seen thus far.

Gilpin says of the stags in the New Forest, if one "be hunted by the king, and escape; or have his life given him for the sport he has afforded, he becomes from thence forward a *hart-royal*. — If he be hunted

out of the forest, and there escape, the king hath sometimes honoured him with a royal proclamation; the purport of which is, to forbid any one to molest him, that he may have free liberty of returning to his forest. From that time he becomes a *hart-royal proclaimed.*" As is said of Richard the First, that, having pursued a hart a great distance, "the king in gratitude for the diversion he had received, ordered him immediately to be proclaimed at Tickill, and at all the neighbouring towns." [1] (A hart is a stag in his fifth or sixth year and upward.)

Think of having such a fellow as that for a king, causing his proclamation to be blown about your country towns at the end of his day's sport, at Tickill or elsewhere, that you hinds may not molest the hart that has afforded him such an ever-memorable day's sport. Is it not time that his subjects whom he has so sorely troubled and so long, be *harts-royal proclaimed* themselves, — who have afforded him such famous sport? It will be a finer day's-sport when the hinds shall turn and hunt the royal hart himself beyond the bounds of his forest and his kingdom, and in perpetual banishment alone he become a royal hart proclaimed. Such is the magnanimity of royal hearts that, through a whimsical prick of generosity, spares the game it could not kill, and fetters its equals with its arbitrary will. Kings love to say "shall" and "will."

Rain, rain, rain, all day, carrying off the snow. It appears, then, that if you go out at this season and walk in the sun in a clear, warm day like yesterday,

[1] [William Gilpin, *Remarks on Forest Scenery*, London, 1794.]

while the earth is covered with snow, you may have your face burnt in a few moments. The rays glance off from the snowy crystals and scorch the skin.

Thinking of the value of the gull to the scenery of our river in the spring, when for a few weeks they are seen circling about so deliberately and heavily yet gracefully, without apparent object, beating like a vessel in the air, Gilpin says something to the purpose, that water-fowl "discover in their flight some determined aim. They eagerly coast the river, or return to the sea; bent on some purpose, of which they never lose sight. But the evolutions of the gull appear capricious, and undirected, both when she flies alone, and, as she often does, in large companies. — The more however her character suffers as a loiterer, the more it is raised in picturesque value, by her continuing longer before the eye; and displaying, in her elegant sweeps along the air, her sharp-pointed wings, and her bright silvery hue. — She is beautiful also, not only on the wing, but when she floats, in numerous assemblies on the water; or when she rests on the shore, dotting either one, or the other with white spots; which, minute as they are, are very picturesque: . . . giving life and spirit to a view." [1]

He seems to be describing our very bird. I do not *remember* to have seen them over or in our river meadows when there was not ice there. They come annually a-fishing here like royal hunters, to remind us of the sea and that our town, after all, lies but further up a creek of the universal sea, above the head of the tide.

[1] [*Op. cit.*]

So ready is a deluge to overwhelm our lands, as the gulls to circle hither in the spring freshets. To see a gull beating high over our meadowy flood in chill and windy March is akin to seeing a mackerel schooner on the coast. It is the nearest approach to sailing vessels in our scenery. I never saw one at Walden. Oh, how it salts our fresh, our sweet watered Fair Haven all at once to see this sharp-beaked, greedy sea-bird beating over it! For a while the water is brackish to my eyes. It is merely some herring pond, and if I climb the eastern bank I expect to see the Atlantic there covered with countless sails. We are so far maritime, do not dwell beyond the range of the seagoing gull, the littoral birds. Does not the gull come up after those suckers which I see? He is never to me perfectly in harmony with the scenery, but, like the high water, something unusual.

What a novel life, to be introduced to a dead sucker floating on the water in the spring! Where was it spawned, pray? The sucker is so recent, so unexpected, so unrememberable, so unanticipatable a creation. While so many institutions are gone by the board, and we are despairing of men and of ourselves, there seems to be life even in a dead sucker, whose fellows at least are alive. The world never looks more recent or promising — religion, philosophy, poetry — than when viewed from this point. To see a sucker tossing on the spring flood, its swelling, imbricated breast heaving up a bait to not-despairing gulls! It is a strong and a strengthening sight. Is the world coming to an end? Ask the chubs. As long as fishes spawn, glory and

honor to the cold-blooded who despair! As long as ideas are expressed, as long as friction makes bright, as long as vibrating wires make music of harps, we do not want redeemers. What a volume you might [write] on the separate virtues of the various animals, the black duck and the rest!

How indispensable our one or two flocks of geese in spring and autumn! What would be a spring in which that sound was not heard? Coming to unlock the fetters of northern rivers. Those annual steamers of the air.

Would it not be a fine office to preserve the *vert* of this forest in which I ramble?

Channing calls our walks along the banks of the river, taking a boat for convenience at some distant point, *riparial* excursions. It is a pleasing epithet, but I mistrust such, even as good as this, in which the mere name is so agreeable, as if it would ring hollow ere long; and rather the thing should make the true name poetic at last. Alcott wished me to name my book *Sylvania!* But he and C. are two men in these respects. We make a good many prairial excursions. We take a boat four or five miles out, then paddle up the stream as much further, meanwhile landing and making excursions inland or further along the banks.

Walden is but little more melted than yesterday.

I see that the grass, which, unless in the most favored spots, did not show any evidence of spring to the casual glance before the snow, will look unexpectedly green as soon as it has gone. It has actually grown beneath it. The lengthened spires about our pump remind me

of flame, as if it were a kind of green flame allied to fire, as it is the product of the sun.

The aspen on the railroad is beginning to blossom, showing the purple or mulberry in the terminal catkins, though it droops like dead cats' tails in the rain. It appears about the same date with the elm.

Is it the chickweed so forward by our back doorstep?

Vide that sentence in Gilpin about "*Lawing*, or *expeditation*, was a forest term for disqualifying a dog to exert such speed, as was necessary to take a deer. It was performed either by cutting out the sole of his foot, or by taking off two of his claws by a chisel, and mallet." [1] A gentleman might keep a greyhound within ten miles of the forest if he was *lawed*. It reminds me of the majority of human hounds that tread the forest paths of this world; they go slightly limping in their gait, as if disqualified by a cruel fate to overtake the nobler game of the forest, their natural quarry. Most men are such dogs. Ever and anon starting a quarry, with perfect scent, which, from this cruel maiming and disqualification of the fates, he is incapable of coming up with. Does not the noble dog shed tears?

Gilpin on the subject of docking horses' tails; thinks that leaving the tail may even help the racer to fly toward the goal.

I notice that the sterile blossoms of that large-catkined early willow begin to open on the side of the catkin, like a tinge of golden light, gradually spreading and

[1] Poet laureate lawed.

expanding over the whole surface and lifting their anthers far and wide. The stem of these sterile catkins is more reddish, smoother, and slenderer than that of the female ones (pale-flowered), which is darker and downy.

April 16. That large early swamp (?) willow catkin (the sterile blossom) opens on one side like a tinge of golden sunlight, the yellow anthers bursting through the down that invests the scales.

2 P. M. — To Conantum.

It clears up (the rain) at noon, with a rather cool wind from the northwest and flitting clouds. The ground about one third covered with snow still. What variety in the trunks of oaks! How expressive of strength are some! There is one behind Hubbard's which expresses a sturdy strength, thus: with a protuberant ridge and seam toward the north. There is a still more remarkable one in a different style near Derby's Bridge. The very emblem of sturdy resistance to tempests.

How many there are who advise you to print! How few who advise you to lead a more interior life! In the one case there is all the world to advise you, in the other there is none to advise you but yourself. Nobody ever advised me not to print but myself. The public persuade the author to print, as the meadow invites the brook to fall into it. Only he can be trusted with gifts who can present a face of bronze to expectations.

As I turned round the corner of Hubbard's Grove, saw a woodchuck, the first of the season, in the middle

of the field, six or seven rods from the fence which bounds the wood, and twenty rods distant. I ran along the fence and cut him off, or rather overtook him, though he started at the same time. When I was only a rod and a half off, he stopped, and I did the same; then he ran again, and I ran up within three feet of him, when he stopped again, the fence being between us. I squatted down and surveyed him at my leisure. His eyes were dull black and rather inobvious, with a faint chestnut (?) iris, with but little expression and that more of resignation than of anger. The general aspect was a coarse grayish brown, a sort of grisel (?). A lighter brown next the skin, then black or very dark brown and tipped with whitish rather loosely. The head between a squirrel and a bear, flat on the top and dark brown, and darker still or black on the tip of the nose. The whiskers black, two inches long. The ears very small and roundish, set far back and nearly buried in the fur. Black feet, with long and slender claws for digging. It appeared to tremble, or perchance shivered with cold. When I moved, it gritted its teeth quite loud, sometimes striking the under jaw against the other chatteringly, sometimes grinding one jaw on the other, yet as if more from instinct than anger. Whichever way I turned, that way it headed. I took a twig a foot long and touched its snout, at which it started forward and bit the stick, lessening the distance between us to two feet, and still it held all the ground it gained. I played with it tenderly awhile with the stick, trying to open its gritting jaws. Ever its long incisors, two above and two below, were presented. But I thought

it would go to sleep if I stayed long enough. It did not sit upright as sometimes, but *standing* on its fore feet with its head down, *i. e.* half sitting, half standing. We sat looking at one another about half an hour, till we began to feel mesmeric influences. When I was tired, I moved away, wishing to see him run, but I could not start him. He would not stir as long as I was looking at him or could see him. I walked round him; he turned as fast and fronted me still. I sat down by his side within a foot. I talked to him *quasi* forest lingo, baby-talk, at any rate in a conciliatory tone, and thought that I had some influence on him. He gritted his teeth less. I chewed checkerberry leaves and presented them to his nose at last without a grit; though I saw that by so much gritting of the teeth he had worn them rapidly and they were covered with a fine white powder, which, if you measured it thus, would have made his anger terrible. He did not mind any noise I might make. With a little stick I lifted one of his paws to examine it, and held it up at pleasure. I turned him over to see what color he was beneath (darker or more purely brown), though he turned himself back again sooner than I could have wished. His tail was also all brown, though not very dark, rat-tail like, with loose hairs standing out on all sides like a caterpillar brush. He had a rather mild look. I spoke kindly to him. I reached checkerberry leaves to his mouth. I stretched my hands over him, though he turned up his head and still gritted a little. I laid my hand on him, but immediately took it off again, instinct not being wholly overcome. If I had had

a few fresh bean leaves, thus in advance of the season, I am sure I should have tamed him completely. It was a frizzly tail. His is a humble, terrestrial color like the partridge's, well concealed where dead wiry grass rises above darker brown or chestnut dead leaves, — a modest color. If I had had some food, I should have ended with stroking him at my leisure. Could easily have wrapped him in my handkerchief. He was not fat nor particularly lean. I finally had to leave him without seeing him move from the place. A large, clumsy, burrowing squirrel. *Arctomys*, bear-mouse. I respect him as one of the natives. He lies there, by his color and habits so naturalized amid the dry leaves, the withered grass, and the bushes. A sound nap, too, he has enjoyed in his native fields, the past winter. I think I might learn some wisdom of him. His ancestors have lived here longer than mine. He is more thoroughly acclimated and naturalized than I. Bean leaves the red man raised for him, but he can do without them.

The streaked mahogany spathes of the skunk-cabbage, which for some time have pushed up and stood above the naked ground where is no leaf yet, of this or other plant, inclosing the now perfect flower and for some time perfect, are like bent spear-heads ("ovate swelling," "incurved," "cucullate") appearing above the ground, a sort of device in nature. The foremost of the summer's phalanx. This is the earliest flower that I know.

How inconspicuous the blossoms of the woods are! How many have seen the pistillate flowers of the hazel,

"star-like tufts of crimson stigmas?" All boys know the nuts, yet man nor boy the flower, though, minute [as it is,] it is interesting. They turn dark and shrivel soon in the pocket; cannot be brought home so. Their catkins also are perfect now. They may be mentioned immediately after the alders.

The red stems of the cornel (?) are conspicuous at this season. I think that the tassels of the *Alnus incana* are rather earlier, longer, and more yellow, with smaller scales, than those of the *A. serrulata*, which are not yellow but green, mixed with the purplish or reddish brown scales. It is pleasant to walk the windy causeways where the tassels of the alders are dangling and swinging now.

The water on the meadows is now quite high on account of the melting snow and the rain. It makes a lively prospect when the wind blows, where our summer meads spread, — a tumultuous sea, a myriad waves breaking with whitecaps, like gambolling sheep, for want of other comparison in the country. Far and wide a sea of motion, schools of porpoises, lines of Virgil realized. One would think it a novel sight for inland meadows. Where the cranberry and andromeda and swamp white oak and maple grow, here is a mimic sea, with its gulls. At the bottom of the sea, cranberries.

We love to see streams colored by the earth they have flown over, as well as pure.

Saxifrage, well named, budded but not risen (its stem) on Conantum Cliff. It there grows in the seams of the rocks, where is no earth apparent. The radical leaves of the columbine are also well advanced. Flight

of ducks and partridges earnest but not graceful. I see many nests of squirrels in the trees, which appear to have been made and used the past winter only.

Is that a black ash in Conant's orchard by the river-side? Stand half-way down the hill north of Fair Haven Pond, the sun in clouds, the wind pretty strong from the northward, the pond and meadow on the south (at 4 or 5 o'clock) are of dark and sad aspect as in a rainy day, with streaks of foam at intervals of six or eight feet, stretching quite across from north to south. Eastward the water is lighter; northeastward it is a very dark, deep blue, yet full of light; northward it is a dark and angry flood, with one or two white-capped waves in the distance.

I saw two or three large white birds in middle of pond, probably gulls (!),[1] though the ice has long been gone.

The two states of the meadow are to be remembered: first in a March or April wind, as I have described it; second in a perfectly calm and beautiful mild morning or evening or midday, as lately, at the same season, such as I have also partially described, when there are no gulls circling over it. What different thoughts it suggests! Would it not be worth the while to describe the different states of our meadows which cover so large a portion of the town? It is not as if we had a few acres only of water surface. From every side the milk-man rides over long causeways into the village, and carries the vision of much meadow's surface with him into his dreams. They answer to moods of the Concord

[1] Whistlers.

mind. There might be a chapter: The Sudbury Meadows, the Humors of the Town.

Might I not write on sunshine as well as moonshine? Might I not observe the sun, at least when the moon does not show her crescent?

Saw a red squirrel, or a tawny one rather.

I think our overflowing river far handsomer and more abounding in soft and beautiful contrasts than a merely broad river would be. A succession of bays it is, a chain of lakes, an endlessly scalloped shore, rounding wood and field. Cultivated field and wood and pasture and house are brought into ever new and unexpected positions and relations to the water. There is just stream enough for a flow of thought; that is all. Many a foreigner who has come to this town has worked for years on its banks without discovering which way the river runs.

I see where moles have been at work near the river on the sides of hills, probably under the snow.

Hawks sail over dry (?) meadows now, because the frogs are out.

April 17. Gilpin says, "As the wheeling motion of the gull is beautiful, so also is the figured flight of the goose, the duck, and the widgeon; all of which are highly ornamental to coast-views, bays, and estuaries." [1] A flight of ducks adds to the wildness of our wildest river scenery. Undoubtedly the soaring and sailing of the hen-hawk, the red-shouldered buzzard (?), is the most ornamental, graceful, stately, beautiful to contemplate,

[1] [*Remarks on Forest Scenery.*]

of all the birds that ordinarily frequent our skies. The eagle is but a rare and casual visitor. The goose, the osprey, the great heron, though interesting, are either transient visitors or rarely seen; they either move through the air as passengers or too exclusively looking for their prey, but the hen-hawk soars like a creature of the air. The flight of martins is interesting in the same way. When I was young and compelled to pass my Sunday in the house without the aid of interesting books, I used to spend many an hour till the wished-for sundown, watching the martins soar, from an attic window; and fortunate indeed did I deem myself when a hawk appeared in the heavens, though far toward the horizon against a downy cloud, and I searched for hours till I had found his mate. They, at least, took my thoughts from earthly things.

Gilpin says that the black-cock, scarce in the New Forest, "has the honour, which no other bird can boast, of being protected as royal-game." [1]

Stood by the riverside early this morning. The water has been rising during the night. The sun has been shining on it half an hour. It is quite placid. The village smokes are seen against the long hill. And now I see the river also is awakening, a slight ripple beginning to appear on its surface. It wakens like the village.

It proves a beautiful day, and I see that glimmering or motion in the air just above the fields, which we associate with heat. I noticed yesterday that some of those early staminate catkins had apparently been blasted on one side by the snow. The waters are, after

[1] [*Op. cit.*]

all, as quiet at noon as in the morning, and I see the reflections with rare distinctness from my window.

Up the east bank of river to Fair Haven at 2 P. M.

The farmers are in haste beginning their plowing. The season is remarkably backward. The wind is rising at last, and it is somewhat from the east-south-east, but it is the more fresh and life-giving. The water is over the Corner road since last night, higher than before this season, so that we (I and C.) go not that way. In that little pasture of Potter's under the oak, I am struck with the advantage of the fence in landscapes. Here is but a half-acre inclosed, but the fence has the effect of confining the attention to this little undulation of the land and to make you consider it by itself, and the importance of the oak is proportionally increased. This formation of the surface would be lost in an unfenced prairie, but the fence, which nearly enough defines it, frames it and presents it as a picture.

Sat on the smooth river-bank under Fair Haven, the sunlight in the wood across the stream. It proves a breezy afternoon. There are fresh cobwebs on the alders in the sun. The atmosphere grows somewhat misty and blue in the distance. The sun-sparkle on the water, — is it not brighter now than it will be in summer? In this freshet and overflow, the permanent shore and shore-marks are obliterated, and the wooded point making into the water shows no gradations, no naked stems beneath, but the pine boughs and the bushes actually rest gently on the water. There is no shore. The waters steal so gently and noiselessly

over the land amid the alders and the copses, so soft, so placid a shore, which would not wreck a cranberry! The groves are simply immersed, as when you raise the water in a wine-glass by dropping pins into it. What is that large hawk with a pure white belly and slender long black wings (a goshawk?) [1] which I see sailing over the Cliffs, — a pair of them looking for prey? From this burnt shrub oak plain beneath the Cliff, where in spots not even the grass has caught again, I see the pond southward through the hazy atmosphere, a blue rippled water surrounded mistily by red shrub oak woods and on one side green pines and tawny grass, — a blue rippled water surrounded by low reddish shrub oak hills, — the whole invested, softened, and made more remote and indistinct by a bluish mistiness. I am not sure but the contrast is more exciting and lastingly satisfactory than if the woods were green. A meadow must not be deep nor have well-defined shore. The more indented and finely divided and fringed and shallow and copsy its shore, the more islanded bushes and cranberry vines appear here and there above the surface, the more truly it answers to the word meadow or prairie.

These deep withdrawn bays, like that toward Well Meadow, are resorts for many a shy flock of ducks. They are very numerous this afternoon. We scare them up every quarter of a mile. Mostly the whitish duck which Brown thinks the golden-eye (we call them whistlers), and also black ducks, perchance also sheldrakes. They are quite shy; swim rapidly

[1] Or fish hawk (?).

away far into the pond. A flock which we surprised in the smooth bay of Well Meadow divided and showed much cunning, dodging under the shore to avoid us.

Struck upon a wild maple swamp a little northwest (?) of Well Meadow Head, where the ground had the appearance of a wild ravine running up from the swamp water here, even to the rocks of the Cliffs which from no other point would be associated with this place. Here is a very retired wild swamp, now drowned land, with picturesque maples in it, and the leaves and sticks on the bottom seen through the transparent water, the yellowish bottom, yellow with decayed leaves, etc. Found within the just swelling buds of the amelanchier [1] evidences of the coming blossom.

Observed in the second of the chain of ponds between Fair Haven and Walden a large (for the pond) island patch of the dwarf andromeda, I sitting on the east bank; its fine brownish-red color very agreeable and memorable to behold. In the last long pond, looking at it from the south, I saw it filled with a slightly grayish shrub which I took for the sweet-gale, but when I had got round to the east side, chancing to turn round, I was surprised to see that all this pond-hole also was filled with the same warm brownish-red-colored andromeda. The fact was I was opposite to the sun, but from every other position I saw only the sun reflected from the surface of the andromeda leaves, which gave the whole a grayish-brown hue tinged with red; but from this position alone I saw, as it were, through

[1] Or was it *Pyrus arbutifolia*, choke-berry?

the leaves which the opposite sun lit up, giving to the whole this charming warm, what I call *Indian*, red color, — the mellowest, the ripest, red imbrowned color; but when I looked to the right or left, *i. e.* north or south, the more the swamp had the mottled light or grayish aspect where the light was reflected from the surfaces of the leaves. And afterward, when I had risen higher up the hill, though still opposite the sun, the light came reflected upward from the surfaces, and I lost that warm, rich red tinge, surpassing cathedral windows. Let me look again at a different hour of the day, and see if it is really so. It is a very interesting piece of magic. It is the autumnal tints in spring, only more subdued and mellow. These leaves are so slow to decay. *Vide* when they fall. Already these ponds are greened with frog-spittle.[1] I see the tracks of muskrats through it. Hear the faint croak of frogs and the still rather faint peeping of hylas. It is about 4.30 P. M.

The form of the surface hereabouts is very agreeable. There are many dry hollows and valleys hereabouts connecting these two ponds. The undulating ground.

A fisherman, making change the other day, gave a ninepence whose pillars were indistinct. Some of the women returned it, whereupon he took it and, taking off his hat, rubbed it on his hair, saying he guessed he could make the pillars appear. The pond is still half covered with ice, and it will take another day like this to empty it. It is clear up tight to the shore on the south side, — dark-gray cold ice, com-

[1] [This sentence is queried in pencil.]

pletely saturated with water. The air from over it is very cold.

The scent of the earliest spring flowers! I smelt the willow catkins to-day, tender and innocent after this rude winter, yet slightly sickening, yet full of vernal promise. This odor, — how unlike anything that winter affords, or nature has afforded this six months! A mild, sweet, vernal scent, not highly spiced and intoxicating, as some ere long, but attractive to bees, — that early yellow smell. The odor of spring, of life developing amid buds, of the earth's epithalamium. The first flowers are not the highest-scented, — as catkins, — as the first birds are not the finest singers, — as the blackbirds and song sparrows, etc. The beginnings of the year are humble. But though this fragrance is not rich, it contains and prophesies all others in it.

The leaves of the *Veratrum viride*, American hellebore, now just pushing up.

April 18.[1] The ground is now generally bare of snow, though it lies along walls and on the north sides of valleys in the woods pretty deep. We have had a great deal of foul weather this season, scarcely two fair days together.

Gray refers the cone-like excrescences on the ends of willow twigs to the punctures of insects. I think that both these and the galls of the oak, etc., are to be regarded as something more normal than this implies. Though it is impossible to draw the line between disease and health at last.

[1] Storm begins this morning and continues five days incessantly.

Day before yesterday I brought home some twigs of that earliest large oval-catkined willow just over Hubbard's Bridge on the right hand, a male tree. The anthers just beginning to show themselves; not *quite* so forward as those above the Deacon Hosmer house, which I have thought to be the same. They looked much the worse for the rain. Catkins about one inch long, not being much expanded yet, opening a little below the apex, two stamens to a scale. There are smaller female bushes further on, on the left, catkins about the same size, with greenish ovaries stalked and rather small and slightly reddish stigmas, four-divided. I thought this the other sex of the same tree. There is also the very gray hardwood-like willow at the bars just beyond Hubbard's Brook, with long, cylindrical, caterpillar-like catkins, which do not yet show their yellow. And, thirdly, opposite the first-named, *i. e.* the other side the way, a smaller-catkined willow not yet showing its yellow. Fourthly, near the Conantum Swamp, sterile catkins *in blossom* on a bush willow an inch and a quarter long, more forward than any, but the stamens one to a bract or scale and bifid or trifid or quatrifid toward the top!! Fifthly, what I should think the *Salix humilis*, *i. e. S. Muhlenbergiana*, shows its small catkins now, but not yet blossoms.

I still feel stiff places in the swamps where there is ice still. Saw yesterday on an apple tree, in company with the *Fringilla hyemalis*, an olivaceous-backed [bird], yellow-throated, and yellow, brown-spotted breast, about the same size or a little less than they, — the first of

the late coming or passing, or the summer, birds? When we have got to these colors, the olivaceous and yellow, then the sun is high in the sky. The *Fringilla hyemalis* is the most common bird at present.

Was pleased to observe yesterday in the woods a new method (to me) which the woodchopper had invented to keep up his corded wood where he could not drive a stake on account of the frost. He had set up the stake on the surface, then looped several large birch withes once about it, resting the wood on their ends, as he carried up the pile, or else he used a forked stick, thus:

2 P. M. — To river.

A driving rain, *i. e.* a rain with easterly wind and driving mists. River higher than before this season, about eighteen inches of the highest arch of the stone bridge above water.

Going through Dennis's field with C., saw a flock of geese on east side of river near willows. Twelve great birds on the troubled surface of the meadow, delayed by the storm. We lay on the ground behind an oak and our umbrella, eighty rods off, and watched them. Soon we heard a gun go off, but could see no smoke in the mist and rain. And the whole flock rose, spreading their great wings and flew with clangor [1] a few rods and lit in the water again, then swam swiftly toward our shore with outstretched necks. I knew them first from ducks by their long necks. Soon ap-

[1] The "honk" of the goose.

peared the man, running toward the shore in vain, in his greatcoat; but he soon retired in vain. We remained close under our umbrella by the tree, ever and anon looking through a peep-hole between the umbrella and the tree at the birds. On they came, sometimes in two, sometimes in three, squads, warily, till we could see the steel-blue and green reflections from their necks. We held the dog close the while, — C., lying on his back in the rain, had him in his arms, — and thus we gradually edged round on the ground in this cold, wet, windy storm, keeping our feet to the tree, and the great wet calf of a dog with his eyes shut so meekly in our arms. We laughed well at our adventure. They swam fast and warily, seeing our umbrella. Occasionally one expanded a gray wing. They showed white on breasts. And not till after half an hour, sitting cramped and cold and wet on the ground, did we leave them.

Ducks also were on the meadow. I have seen more ducks within a few days than ever before. They are apparently delayed here by the backwardness of the season. Yesterday the river was full of them. It proves a serious storm. The point of pines left by Britton on Hubbard's meadow looks very dark in the mist. We cannot see more than eighty rods before as we walk. Saw a sizable hawk in the meadow at N[ut] Meadow crossing, with a white rump, — the hen-harrier (?). The catkins of the *Alnus incana* at Jenny's Brook are longer than ever, — three or four inches. Somebody keeps his minnows there in a barrel. Observed a thistle just springing up in the meadow, a disk of

green a few inches in diameter in the midst of the old decayed leaves, which, now being covered with rain-drops, beaded and edged — the close-packed leaves — *with purple*, made a very rich sight, not to be seen in dry weather. The green leaves of the thistle in a dense disk, edged with purple and covered with bead-like rain-drops, just springing from the meadow. It reminded me of some delicious fruit, all ripe, quite flat. We sought the desert, it is so agreeable to cross the sand in wet weather. You might dig into the sand for dryness. I saw where somebody appeared to have dug there for turtles' eggs. The catkins of some willows, silvery and not yet blossomed, covered with rain-like dew, look like snow or frost, sleet, adhering to the twigs. The andromeda in Tarbell's Swamp does not look so fresh nor red now. Does it require a sunny day? The buds of the balm-of-Gilead, coated with a gummy substance, mahogany(?)-colored, have already a fragrant odor.

Heard the cackling of geese from over the Ministerial Swamp, and soon appeared twenty-eight geese that flew over our heads toward the other river we had left, we now near the black birches. With these great birds in it, the air seems for the first time inhabited. We detect holes in their wings. Their clank expresses anxiety.

The most interesting fact, perhaps, at present is these few tender yellow blossoms, these half-expanded sterile aments of the willow, seen through the rain and cold, — signs of the advancing year, pledges of the sun's return. Anything so delicate, both in struc-

ture, in color and in fragrance, contrasts strangely with surrounding nature and feeds the faith of man. The fields are acquiring a greenish tinge.

The birds which I see and hear in the midst of the storm are robins, song sparrows, blackbirds, and crows occasionally.

This is the spring of the year. Birds are migrating northward to their breeding-places; the melted snows are escaping to the sea. We have now the unspeakable rain of the Greek winter. The element of water prevails. The river has far overflowed its channel. What a conspicuous place Nature has assigned to the skunk-cabbage, first flower to show itself above the bare ground! What occult relation is implied between this plant and man? Most buds have expanded perceptibly, — show some greenness or yellowness. Universally Nature relaxes somewhat of her rigidity, yields to the influence of heat. Each day the grass springs and is greener. The skunk-cabbage is inclosed in its spathe, but the willow catkin expands its bright-yellow blossoms without fear at the end of its twigs, and the fertile flower of the hazel has elevated its almost invisible crimson star of stigmas above the sober and barren earth.

The sight of the sucker floating on the meadow at this season affects me singularly, as if it were a fabulous or mythological fish, realizing my *idea* of a fish. It reminds me of pictures of dolphins or of Proteus. I see it for what it is, — not an actual terrene fish, but the fair symbol of a divine idea, the design of an artist. Its color and form, its gills and fins and

scales, are perfectly beautiful, because they completely express to my mind what they were intended to express. It is as little fishy as a fossil fish. Such a form as is sculptured on ancient monuments and will be to the end of time; made to point a moral. I am serene and satisfied when the birds fly and the fishes swim as in fable, for the moral is not far off; when the migration of the goose is significant and has a moral to it; when the events of the day have a mythological character, and the most trivial is symbolical.

For the first time I perceive this spring that the year is a circle. I see distinctly the spring arc thus far. It is drawn with a firm line. Every incident is a parable of the Great Teacher. The cranberries washed up in the meadows and into the road on the causeways now yield a pleasant acid.

Why should just these sights and sounds accompany our life? Why should I hear the chattering of blackbirds, why smell the skunk each year? I would fain explore the mysterious relation between myself and these things. I would at least know what these things unavoidably are, make a chart of our life, know how its shores trend, that butterflies reappear and when, know why just this circle of creatures completes the world. Can I not by expectation affect the revolutions of nature, make a day to bring forth something new?

As Cowley loved a garden, so I a forest.

Observe all kinds of coincidences, as what kinds of birds come with what flowers.

An east wind. I hear the clock strike plainly ten or eleven P. M.

April 19. 6 A. M. — Rain still, a fine rain. The robin sang early this morning over the bare ground, an hour ago, nevertheless, ushering in the day. Then the guns were fired and the bells rung to commemorate the anniversary of the birth of a nation's liberty. The birds must live on expectation now. There is nothing in nature to cheer them yet.

That last flock of geese yesterday is still in my eye. After hearing their clangor, looking southwest, we saw them just appearing over a dark pine wood, in an irregular waved line, one abreast of the other, as it were breasting the air and pushing it before them. It made you think of the streams of Cayster, etc., etc. They carry weight, such a weight of metal in the air. Their dark waved outline as they disappear. The grenadiers of the air. Man pygmifies himself at sight of these inhabitants of the air. These stormy days they do not love to fly; they alight in some retired marsh or river. From their lofty pathway they can easily spy out the most extensive and retired swamp. How many there must be, that one or more flocks are seen to go over almost every farm in New England in the spring.

That oak by Derby's is a grand object, seen from any side. It stands like an athlete and defies the tempests in every direction. It has not a weak point. It is an agony of strength. Its branches look like stereotyped gray lightning on the sky. But I fear a price is set upon its sturdy trunk and roots for ship-timber, for knees to make stiff the sides of ships against the Atlantic billows. Like an athlete, it shows its well-developed muscles.

I saw yesterday that the farmers had been out to save their fencing-stuff from the flood, and everywhere it was drawn above high-water mark. The North River had fallen nearly a foot, which I cannot account for, unless some of the dams above had broken away or been suddenly raised [*sic*]. This slight difference in the character of the tributaries of a river and their different histories and adventures is interesting, — all making one character at last.

The willow catkin might be the emblem of spring.

The buds of the lilac look ready to take advantage of the first warm day.

The skin of my nose has come off in consequence of that burning of the sun reflected from the snow.

A stormy day.

2 P. M. — With C. over Wood's Bridge to Lee's and back by Baker Farm.

It is a violent northeast storm, in which it is very difficult and almost useless to carry an umbrella. I am soon wet to my skin over half my body. At first, and for a long time, I feel cold and as if I had lost some vital heat by it, but at last the water in my clothes feels warm to me, and I know not but I am dry. It is a wind to turn umbrellas. The meadows are higher, more wild and angry, and the waves run higher with more white to their caps than before this year. I expect to hear of shipwrecks and of damage done by the tide. This wind, too, keeps the water in the river. It is worth the while to walk to-day to hear the rumbling roar of the wind, as if it echoed through the hollow chambers of the air. It even sounds like thunder some-

times, and when you pass under trees, oaks or elms, that overhang the road, the sound is more grand and stormy still. The wind sounds even in open fields as if on a roof over our heads. It sounds as if amid sails. The mists against the woods are seen driving by in upright columns or sections, as if separated by waves of air. Drifting by, they make a dimly mottled landscape.

What comes flapping low with heavy wing over the middle of the flood? Is it an eagle or a fish hawk? Ah, now he is betrayed, I know not by what motion, — a great gull, right in the eye of the storm. He holds not a steady course, but suddenly he dashes upward even like the surf of the sea which he frequents, showing the under sides of his long, pointed wings, on which do I not see two white spots? He suddenly beats upward thus as if to surmount the airy billows by a slanting course, as the teamster surmounts a slope. The swallow, too, plays thus fantastically and luxuriously and leisurely, doubling some unseen corners in the sky. Here is a gull, then, long after ice in the river. It is a fine sight to see this noble bird leisurely advancing right in the face of the storm.

How sweet is the perception of a new natural fact! suggesting what worlds remain to be unveiled. That phenomenon of the andromeda seen against the sun cheers me exceedingly. When the phenomenon was not observed, it was not at all. I think that no man ever takes an original [*sic*], or detects a principle, without experiencing an inexpressible, as quite infinite and sane, pleasure, which advertises him of the

dignity of that truth he has perceived. The thing that pleases me most within these three days is the discovery of the andromeda phenomenon. It makes all those parts of the country where it grows more attractive and elysian to me. It is a natural magic. These little leaves are the stained windows in the cathedral of my world. At sight of any redness I am excited like a cow.

To-day you can find arrowheads, for every stone is washed bright in the rain.

On the Miles road, the *Bæomyces roseus* is now in perfection. Seen on the clay-like surface, amid the dark dead birch and pine leaves, it looks like a minute dull-pinkish bloom, a bloom on the earth, and passes for a terrene flower. It impresses me like a mildew passing into a higher type. It covers large tracts of ground there [with] a pink color. C. calls it flesh-colored, but it is high-colored for that.

Observed the thistle again covered with the beads of rain-drops and tinged with purple on the edges of the leaves. It impressed me again as some rich fruit of the tropics ready to be eaten with a spoon. It suggests pineapples, custard-apples, or what is it? The pasture thistle. All the farmers' cart-paths (for their meadow-hay) are now seen losing themselves in the water. In the midst of this storm I see and hear the robin still and the song sparrow, and see the bluebird also, and the crow, and a hawk a-hunting (a marsh hawk?), and a blue woodpecker, I thought about the size of the hairy. The meadow from Lee's causeway, looking northeast against the storm, looks dark

and, as C. says, slate-colored. I observe that, to get the dark color of the waves, you must not only look in the direction whence they come, but stand as low and nearly on a level with them as possible. If you are on the top of a hill, light is reflected upward to you from their surface. In all this storm and wet, see a muskrat's head in the meadow, as if some one thrust up a mop from below, — literally a drowned rat. Such independence of the moods of nature! He does not care, if he knows, when it rains. Saw a woodchuck out in the storm. The elder buds are forward. I stood by Clematis Brook, hearing the wind roar in the woods and the water in the brook; and, trying to distinguish between these sounds, I at last concluded that the first was a drier sound, the last a wetter. There is a slight dry hum to the wind blowing on the twigs of the forest, a softer and more liquid splashing sound to the water falling on rocks.

Scared up three blue herons in the little pond close by, quite near us. It was a grand sight to see them rise, so slow and stately, so long and limber, with an undulating motion from head to foot, undulating also their large wings, undulating in two directions, and looking warily about them. With this graceful, limber, undulating motion they arose, as if so they got under way, their

two legs trailing parallel far behind like an earthy residuum to be left behind. They are large, like birds of Syrian lands, and seemed to oppress the earth, and hush the hillside to silence, as they winged their way over it, looking back toward us. It would affect our

thoughts, deepen and perchance darken our reflections, if such huge birds flew in numbers in our sky. Have the effect of magnetic passes. They are few and rare. Among the birds of celebrated flight, storks, cranes, geese, and ducks. The legs hang down like a weight which they [?] raise, to pump up as it were with its [*sic*] wings and convey out of danger.

The mist to-day makes those near distances which Gilpin tells of. I saw, looking from the railroad to Fair Haven Hill soon after we started, four such, — the wood on E. Hubbard's meadow, dark but open; that of Hubbard's Grove, showing the branches of the trees; Potter's pitch pines, perhaps one solid black mass with outline only distinct; Brown's on the Cliff, but dimly seen through the mist, — one above and beyond the other, with vales of mist between.

To see the larger and wilder birds, you must go forth in the great storms like this. At such times they frequent our neighborhood and trust themselves in our midst. A life of fair-weather walks *might* never show you the goose sailing on our waters, or the great heron feeding here. When the storm increases, then these great birds that carry the mail of the seasons lay to. To see wild life you must go forth at a wild season. When it rains and blows, keeping men indoors, then the lover of Nature must forth. Then returns Nature to her wild estate. In pleasant sunny weather you may catch butterflies, but only when the storm rages that lays prostrate the forest and wrecks the mariner, do you come upon the feeding-grounds of wildest fowl, — of heron and geese.

The light buff(?)-colored hazel catkins, some three inches long, are conspicuous now.

Beside the direct and steady rain, large drops fall from the trees and dimple the water.

Stopped in the barn on the Baker Farm. Sat in the dry meadow-hay, where the mice nest. To sit there, rustling the hay, just beyond reach of the rain while the storm roars without, it suggested an inexpressible dry stillness, the quiet of the haymow in a rainy day; such stacks of quiet and undisturbed thought, when there is not even a cricket to stir in the hay, but all without is wet and tumultuous, and all within is dry and quiet. Oh, what reams of thought one might have here! The crackling of the hay makes silence audible. It is so deep a bed, it makes one dream to sit on it, to think of it. The never-failing jay still screams. Standing in Pleasant Meadow, Conantum shore, seen through the mist and rain, looks dark and heavy and without perspective, like a perpendicular upon its edge.

Crossed by the chain of ponds to Walden. The first, looking back, appears elevated high above Fair Haven between the hills above the swamp, and the next higher yet. Each is distinct, a wild and interesting pond with its musquash house. The second the simplest perhaps, with decayed spruce (?) trees, rising out of the island of andromeda in its midst, draped with usnea, and the mists now driving between them. Saw the *Veratrum viride*, seven or eight inches high, in Well Meadow Swamp, — the greatest growth of the season, at least above water, if not above or below. I

doubt if there is so much recent vegetable matter pushed above ground elsewhere; certainly there is not unless of pads under water. Yet it did not start so early as it has grown fast. Walden is clear of ice. The ice left it yesterday, then, the 18th. Trillium Woods make a lee thirty or forty rods off, though you are raised twenty feet on the causeway.

April 20. Morning.—Storms still. The robin sings unfailingly each morning at the time the sun should rise, in spite of dreary rain. Some storms have much more wet in them than others, though they look the same to one in the house, and you cannot walk half an hour without being wet through, while in the others you may keep pretty dry a whole afternoon. Turned up the *Juniperus repens* on Conantum yesterday with my foot, which above had a reddish and rusty look; beneath it was of an unexpectedly fine glaucous tinge with a bright green inmixed. Like many things, it looks best in the rain.

They have many birds for sale in Quincy Market next the fish-market. I observe that one cage bears permanently the label "A good singer" tied to it. Every passer's eye rests on it, and he thinks if he were to buy a bird it would be the occupant of that cage. When I go to Boston the next year I perceive that this cage still wears its label, and I suppose that they put a new bird into this cage without changing the label, as fast as they sell the old one. Any bird that is without a home goes into the cage thus labelled, whatever may be his vocal powers. No deception, no falsehood

seems too stale to succeed. The bird-fancier who recommends his bird as "a good singer" finds customers by the means.

Saw yesterday apparently freshly broken shells of tortoise eggs.

April 21. The storm still continues. When I walked in the storm day before yesterday, I felt very cold when my clothes were first wet through, but at last they, being saturated with water, were tight and kept out the air and fresh wet like a thicker and closer garment, and, the water in them being warmed by my person, I felt warmer and even drier.

The color of the water changes with the sky. It is as dull and sober as the sky to-day.

The woodchuck has not far to go to his home. In foul weather, if he chooses, he can turn in anywhere. He lives on and in the earth. A little parasite on the skin of the earth, that knows the taste of clover and bean leaves and beetles.

2 P. M. — Another walk in the rain.

The river is remarkably high. Nobody remembers when the water came into so many cellars. The water is up to the top of the easternmost end of the easternmost iron truss on the south side of the stone bridge. It is over the Union Turnpike that was west of the bridge, so that it is impassable to a foot-traveller, and *just over* the road west of Wood's Bridge. Of eight carriage roads leading into Concord, the water to my knowledge is now over six, *viz.*, Lee's Bridge, the Corner road, Wood's Bridge, Stone Bridge, Red

Bridge (on both sides, full half a mile in all, over the walls), and the Turnpike. All of these are impassable to foot-travellers except Wood's Bridge, where only a lady would be stopped. I should think that nine inches more would carry it over Flint's Bridge road. How it is at the East Quarter schoolhouse I don't know, nor at the further stone bridge and above, nor at Derby's Bridge. It is probably over the road near Miles's in the Corner, and in two places on the Turnpike, perhaps between J. P. Brown's and C. Miles's. This may suggest how low Concord is situated. Most of the cellars on both sides of the main street east of our house have water in them, and some that are on high ground. All this has been occasioned by the repeated storms of snow and rain for a month or six weeks past, especially the melting of the deep snow of April 13th, and, added to this, the steady rain from Sunday morning, April 18th, to this moment, 8 P. M., April 21st. The element of water is in the ascendant. From the Poplar Hill, the expanse of water looks about as large on the southwest as the northeast. Many new islands are made, — of grassy and sometimes rocky knolls, and clumps of trees and bushes where there is no dry land. Straight willow hedges rising above the water in some places, marking the boundaries of some man's improvements, look prettily. Some of the bushy islands on the Great Meadows are distinctly red at this distance, even a mile off, from the stems of some bush not red (distinctly) in fair weather, wet now. Is it cornel?

In front of Peter's. — The grass has been springing in spite of the snow and rain, and the earth has an

increased greenish tinge, though it is still decidedly tawny. Men are out in boats in the rain for muskrats, ducks, and geese. It appears to me, as I stand on this hill, that the white houses of the village, seen through the whitish misty storm and rain, are a very suitable color and harmonize well with the scenery, like concentrations of the mist. It is a cheerful color in stormy weather. A few patches of snow are still left. The robins sing through the ceaseless rain, and the song sparrows, and I hear a lark's plaintive strain. I am glad that men are so dispersed over the earth. The need of fuel causes woods to be left, and the use of cattle and horses requires pastures, and hence men live far apart and the walkers of every town have this wide range over forest and field. Sitting behind the wall on the height of the road beyond N. Barrett's (for we have come down the north bank of the river), I love in this weather to look abroad and let my eye fall on some sandy hill clothed with pitch pines on its sides, and covered on its top with the whitish cladonia lichen, usually so dry but now saturated with water. It reminds me of northern regions. I am thinking of the hill near Tarbell's, three quarters of a mile from me. They are agreeable colors to my eye, the green pine and, on the summit, the patches of whitish moss like mildew seen through the mist and rain, for I think, perhaps, how much moisture that soil can bear, how grateful it is to it.

Proceed toward Hubbard's black birch hill. The grass is greenest in the hollows where some snow and ice are still left melting, showing by its greenness how much space they recently covered.

On the east side of Ponkawtasset I hear a robin singing cheerily from some perch in the wood, in the midst of the rain, where the scenery is now wild and dreary. His song a singular antagonism and offset to the storm. As if Nature said, "Have faith, these *two* things I can do." It sings with power, like a bird of great faith that sees the bright future through the dark present, to reassure the race of man, like one to whom many talents were given and who will improve its talents. They are sounds to make a dying man live. They sing not their despair. It is a pure, immortal melody.

The side of the hill is covered first with tall birches rising from a reddish ground, just above a small swamp; then comes a white pine wood whose needles, covered with the fine rain-drops, have a light sheen on them. I see one pine that has been snapped off half-way up in the storm, and, seen against the misty background, it is a distinct yellow mark. The sky is not one homogeneous color, but somewhat mottled with darker clouds and white intervals, and anon it rains harder than before. (I saw the other day the rootlets which spring from the alder above the ground, so tenacious of the earth is it.) Was that a large shad-bush where Father's mill used to be? There is quite a waterfall beyond, where the old dam was. Where the rapids commence, at the outlet of the pond, the water is singularly creased as it rushes to the fall, like braided hair, as the poet has it. I did not see any inequalities in the rock it rushed over which could make it so plaited. Here is enough of that suds which in warm weather disperses such a sense of coolness through the

air. Sat under the dark hemlocks, gloomy hemlocks, on the hillside beyond. In a stormy day like this there is the gloom of night beneath them. The ground beneath them almost bare, with wet rocks and fine twigs, without leaves (but hemlock leaves) or grass.

The birds are singing in the rain about the small pond in front, the inquisitive chickadee that has flown at once to the alders to reconnoitre us, the blackbirds, the song sparrow, telling of expanding buds. But above all the robin sings here too, I know not at what distance in the wood. "Did he sing thus in Indian days?" I ask myself; for I have always associated this sound with the village and the clearing, but now I do detect the aboriginal wildness in his strain, and can imagine him a woodland bird, and that he sang thus when there was no civilized ear to hear him, a pure forest melody even like the wood thrush. Every genuine thing retains this wild tone, which no true culture displaces. I heard him even as he might have sounded to the Indian, singing at evening upon the elm above his wigwam, with which was associated in the red man's mind the events of an Indian's life, his childhood. Formerly I had heard in it only those strains which tell of the white man's village life; now I heard those strains which remembered the red man's life, such as fell on the ears of Indian children,—as he sang when these arrowheads, which the rain has made shine so on the lean stubble-field, were fastened to their shaft. Thus the birds sing round this piece of water, some on the alders which fringe, some farther off and higher up the hills; it is a centre to them. Here stand

buttonwoods, an uncommon tree in the woods, naked to look at, and now covered with little tufts of twigs on the sides of the branches in consequence of the disease which has attacked them. The singing of birds implies fair weather.

I see where some farmer has been at pains to knock to pieces the manure which his cattle have dropped in the pasture, so to spread it over the sward. The yellow birch is to me an interesting tree from its remarkable and peculiar color, like a silvery gold. In the pasture beyond the brook, where grow the barberries, huckleberries, — creeping juniper, etc., are half a dozen huge boulders, which look grandly now in the storm, covered with greenish-gray lichens, alternating with the slatish-colored rock. Slumbering, silent, like the exuviæ of giants; some of their cattle left. From a height I look down on some of them as on the backs of oxen. A certain personality, or at least brute life, they seem to have. C. calls it Boulder Field. There is a good prospect southward over the pond, between the two hills, even to the *river meadows* now.

As we stand by the monument on the Battle-Ground, I see a white pine dimly in the horizon just north of Lee's Hill, at 5.30 P. M., its upright stem and straight horizontal feathered branches, while at the same time I hear a robin sing. Each enhances the other. That tree seems the emblem of my life; it stands for the west, the wild. The sight of it is grateful to me as to a bird whose perch it is to be at the end of a weary flight. I [am] not sure whether the music I hear is most in the robin's song or in its boughs. My wealth should

be all in pine-tree shillings. The pine tree that stands on the verge of the clearing, whose boughs point westward; which the village does not permit to grow on the common or by the roadside; which is banished from the village; in whose boughs the crow and the hawk have their nests.

We have heard enough nonsense about the Pyramids. If Congress should vote to rear such structures on the prairies to-day, I should not think it worth the while, nor be interested in the enterprise. It was the foolish undertaking of some tyrant. "But," says my neighbor, "when they were built, all men believed in them and were inspired to build them." Nonsense! nonsense! I believe that they were built essentially in the same spirit in which the public works of Egypt, of England, and America are built to-day, — the Mahmoudi Canal, the Tubular Bridge, Thames Tunnel, and the Washington Monument. The inspiring motive in the actual builders of these works is garlic, or beef, or potatoes. For meat and drink and the necessaries of life men can be hired to do many things. "Ah," says my neighbor, "but the stones are fitted with such nice joints!" But the joints were nicer yet before they were disjointed in the quarry. Men are wont to speak as if it were a noble work to build a pyramid, — to set, forsooth, a hundred thousand Irishmen at work at fifty cents a day to piling stone. As if the good joints could ennoble it, if a noble motive was wanting! To ramble round the world to see that pile of stones which ambitious Mr. Cheops, an Egyptian booby, like some Lord Timothy Dexter, caused a hundred thousand

poor devils to pile up for low wages, which contained for all treasure the thigh-bone of a cow. The tower of Babel has been a good deal laughed at. It was just as sensible an undertaking as the Pyramids, which, because they were completed and have stood to this day, are admired. I don't believe they made a better joint than Mr. Crab, the joiner, can.[1]

I have not this season heard more robins sing than this rainy day.

April 22. It still rains. The water is over the road at Flint's Bridge, and, as I am told, has been for some time over the J. Miles road in the Corner, and near the further stone bridge. So that there is now only the Boston road open, unless we regard the Walden road as coming from Wayland and not from Lee's Bridge. At 9 A. M. it was five and one half inches higher than the east end of the eastern truss, horizontal part, on the south side of the stone bridge. Up to the top of the lowest stone step on the north side east end of railroad bridge. Mr. Stacy thinks it was higher thirty years ago, when a man, horse, and sleigh were washed off the Red Bridge road and lodged against a tree in the meadow. And Sam Barrett thinks it was about one foot higher some thirty-five years ago. Water a foot deep on Wood's Bridge road. Abel Hunt saw a flock of geese this morning.

This flood tempts men to build boats. I saw two on the stocks this morning. It is pleasant work to see progressing.

[1] [See *Walden*, p. 64; Riv. 93.]

P. M. — Up river on east side.

It takes this day to clear up gradually; successive sun-showers still make it foul. But the sun feels very warm after the storm. This makes five stormy days. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. The water, slightly agitated, looks bright when the sun shines. Saw four hawks soaring high in the heavens over the Swamp Bridge Brook. At first saw three; said to myself there must be four, and found the fourth. Glad are they, no doubt, to be out after being confined by the storm. I hear bees (?) humming near the brook, which reminded me of the telegraph harp.

I love to see the dull gravity, even stolidity, of the farmer opposed to the fluency of the lawyer or official person. The farmer sits silent, not making any pretensions nor feeling any responsibility even to apprehend the other, while the Judge or Governor talks glibly and with official dispatch, all lost on the farmer, who minds it not, but looks out for the main chance, with his great inexpressive face and his two small eyes, looking the first in the face and rolling a quid in the back part of his mouth. The lawyer is wise in deeds, but the farmer, who buys land, puts the pertinent questions respecting the title.

I observe the *Parmelia saxatilis* in many places, now turned a pinkish. The yellow lily leaves appear no more advanced than when I first observed them. A strange dog accompanied us to-day, a hunting dog, gyrating about us at a great distance, beating every bush and barking at the birds, with great speed, gyrat-

ing his tail too all the while. I thought of what Gilpin says, that he sailed and steered by means of his tail. Sat under Potter's oak, the ground thickly strewn with broken acorn shells and cups and twigs, the short, close-nibbled sward of last year. Our dog sends off a partridge with a whir, far across the open field and the river, like a winged bullet. From Cliffs see much snow on the mountains. The pine on Lee's shore of the pond, seen against the light water this cloudy weather from part way down the Cliff, is an agreeable object to me. When the outline and texture of white pine is thus seen against the water or the sky, it is an affecting sight. The shadow of the Cliff on Conantum in the semi-sunshine, with indistinct edge and a reddish tinge from bushes here and there!

I want things to be incredible, — too good to appear true. C. says, "After you have been to the post-office once you are damned!" But I answer that it depends somewhat on whether you get a letter or not. If you should not get a letter there is some hope for you. If you would be wise, learn science and then forget it. A boat on the river, on the white surface, looks black, and the boatman like Charon. I see swarms of gnats in the air. What is that grass with a yellow blossom which I find now on the Cliff?[1] It is the contrast between sunshine and storm that is most pleasing; the gleams of sunshine in the midst of the storm are the most memorable. Saw that winkle-like fungus, *fresh and green*, covering an oak stump to-day with concentric marks, spirally

[1] *Carex marginata* (?), early sedge, the earliest grass [*sic*] that flowers.

arranged, sometimes in a circle, very handsome. I love this apparent exuberance of nature.

The maples in the side swamp near Well Meadow are arranged nearly in a circle in the water. This stranger dog has good habits for a companion, he keeps so distant. He never trusts himself near us, though he accompanies us for miles. On the most retired, the wildest and craggiest, most precipitous hillside you will find some old road by which the teamster carted off the wood. It is pleasant sometimes looking thirty or forty rods into an open wood, where the trunks of the trees are plainly seen, and patches of soft light on the ground. The hylas peep now in full chorus, but are silent on my side of the pond. The water at 6 P. M. is one and a half inches higher than in the morning, *i. e.* seven inches above the iron truss. The strain of the red-wing on the willow spray over the water to-night is liquid, bubbling, watery, almost like a tinkling fountain, in perfect harmony with the meadow. It oozes, trickles, tinkles, bubbles from his throat, — *bob-y-lee-e-e,* and then its shrill, fine whistle.

The villagers walk the streets and talk of the great rise of waters.

At 10 P. M. the northern lights are flashing, like some grain sown broadcast in the sky. I hear the hylas peep on the meadow as I stand at the door.

The early sedge (?) grows on the side of the Cliffs in little tufts with small yellow blossoms, *i. e.* with yellow anthers, low in the grass.

Mr. Holbrook tells me he heard and saw martins (?) yesterday.[1]

[1] Storm ends this evening.

April 23. The water has risen one and a half inches at six this morning since last night. It is now, then, eight and a half inches above the iron truss, *i. e.* the horizontal part of it.[1] There is absolutely no passing, in carriages or otherwise, over Hubbard's and the Red Bridge roads, and over *none* [*sic*] of the bridges for foot-travellers. Throughout this part of the country most people do not remember so great a flood, but, judging from some accounts, it was probably as high here thirty-five years ago. The willow catkins have made but little progress for a week. They have suffered from the cold rain and wind, and are partly blasted. It is a pleasant sight, among the pleasantest, at this season, to see the at first reddish anthers of the sterile catkins of our earliest willow bursting forth on their upper sides like rays of sunshine from amidst the *downy* fog, turning a more and more lively yellow as the pollen appears, — like a flash of sulphur. It is like the sun bursting out of a *downy* cloud or mists. I hear this morning, in the pine woods above the railroad bridge, for the first time, that delicious cool-sounding *wetter-wetter-wetter-wetter-wet'* from that small bird (pine warbler?) in the tops of the pines.[2] I associate it with the *cool, moist, evergreen spring* woods.

The wood pewee[3] on an elm sings now *peer-r-weet peer-r-weet, peer-wee'*. It is not the simple *peer-r-wet*

[1] Greatest height. *Vide* Aug. 23d, when apparently it was as low as any time that year.

[2] *Vide* April 24 [p. 464].

[3] [This is queried in pencil after the word "wood." The bird must have been a phœbe.]

peer-r-wee' that I heard at first. Will it not change next to that more tender strain?

Vegetation starts when the earth's axis is sufficiently inclined; *i. e.* it follows the sun. Insects and all the smaller animals (as well as many larger) follow vegetation. The fishes, the small fry, start probably for this reason; worms come out of the trees; buffaloes finally seek new pastures; water-bugs appear on the water, etc., etc. Next, the large fish and fish hawks, etc., follow the small fry; flycatchers follow the insects and worms. (The granivorous birds, who can depend on the supplies of dry seeds of last year, are to some extent independent of the seasons, and can remain through the winter or come early in the spring, and they furnish food for a few birds of prey at that season.) Indians follow the buffaloes; trout, suckers, etc., follow the water-bugs, etc.; reptiles follow vegetation, insects, and worms; birds of prey, the flycatchers, etc. Man follows all, and all follow the sun. The greater or less abundance of food determines migrations. If the buds are deceived and suffer from frost, then are the birds. The great necessary of life for the brute creation is food; next, perhaps, shelter, *i. e.* a suitable climate; thirdly, perhaps, security from foes.

The storm may be said to have fairly ended last night. I observed yesterday that it was drier in most fields, pastures, and even meadows that were not reached by the flood, *immediately* after this remarkable fall of water than at the beginning. The condition of the fields has been steadily improving for walkers.

I think one reason is that there was some frost in the ground which the rain melted, so that the ground soaked up the water. But no doubt it goes to prove the dryness of our sandy soil and absence of springs.

At 6 P. M. the water has fallen an inch and a half.

Heard the pigeon woodpecker to-day, that long-continued unmusical note, — somewhat like a robin's, heard afar, — yet pleasant to hear because associated with a more advanced stage of the season. Saw the *Fringilla hyemalis* to-day, lingering still.

April 24. 6 A. M. — Water has fallen an inch and a half since last night, — which is at a regular rate.

I know two species of men. The vast majority are men of society. They live on the surface; they are interested in the transient and fleeting; they are like driftwood on the flood. They ask forever and only the news, the froth and scum of the eternal sea. They use policy; they make up for want of matter with manner. They have many letters to write. Wealth and the approbation of men is to them success. The enterprises of society are something final and sufficing for them. The world advises them, and they listen to its advice. They live wholly an evanescent life, creatures of circumstance. It is of prime importance to them who is the president of the day. They have no knowledge of truth, but by an exceedingly dim and transient instinct, which stereotypes the church and some other institutions. They dwell, they are ever, right in my face and eyes like gnats; they are like motes, so near the eyes that, looking beyond, they appear like blurs;

they have their being between my eyes and the end of my nose. The *terra firma* of my existence lies far beyond, behind them and their improvements. If they write, the best of them deal in "elegant literature." Society, man, has no prize to offer me that can tempt me; not one. That which interests a town or city or any large number of men is always something trivial, as politics. It is impossible for me to be interested in what interests men generally. Their pursuits and interests seem to me frivolous. When I am most myself and see the clearest, men are least to be seen; they are like *muscae volitantes*, and that they are seen at all is the proof of imperfect vision. These affairs of men are so narrow as to afford no vista, no distance; it is a shallow foreground only, no large extended views to be taken. Men put to me frivolous questions: When did I come? where am I going? That was a more pertinent question, — what I lectured for? — which one auditor put once to another.[1] What an ordeal it were to make men pass through, to consider how many ever put to you a vital question! Their knowledge of something better gets no further than what is called religion and spiritual knockings.

Now that the sun shines and the sky is blue, the water is a dark blue which in the storm was light or whitish. It follows the sky's, though the sky is a lighter blue.

The lilac buds have looked as forward as any for many weeks.

2 P. M. — To Carlisle Bridge *via* Flint's Bridge, bank

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 470; *Misc.*, Riv. 272.]

of river, rear of Joel Barrett's, returning by bridle-road.

The elms are now fairly in blossom. It is one of those clear, *washing* days, — though the air is cold, — such as succeed a storm, when the air is clear and flowing, and the cultivated ground and the roads shine. Passed Flint's road on the wall. Sorrel is well under weigh, and cinquefoil. White oaks still hold their leaves. The pitch pine is a cheerful tree at this season, with its lively yellow-green in the sunshine, while the landscape is still russet and dead-grass colored.

Sitting by the road beyond N. Barrett's, the colors of the world are: overhead a very light blue sky, darkest in the zenith, lightest in the horizon, with scattered white clouds *seeming* thickest in the horizon; all around the undulating earth a very light tawny color, from the dead grass, with the reddish and gray of forests mingled with evergreen; and, in the lap of earth, very dark blue rippled water, answering to the light blue above; the shadows of clouds flitting over all below; the spires of woods fringing the horizon on every side, and, nearer, single trees here and there seen with dark branches against the sky. This tawny ground divided by walls and houses, white, light slate, and red sprinkled here and there.

Ball's Hill and the rest are deep sunk in the flood. The level water-line appears to best advantage when it appears thus to cut the trees and hills. It looks as if the water were just poured into its basin and simply stood so high. No permanent shore gives you this pleasure.

Saw the honey-bees on the staminate flowers of the willow catkins by the roadside (such as I described April 23d), with little bottles of the yellow pollen, apparently, as big as pin-heads on their thighs. With these flowers, then, come bees. Is there honey in staminate flowers? The innocent odor of spring flowers, flavorless, as a breakfast. They will be more spiced by and by.

Went over the cladonia hills toward Tarbell's. A small tree, an oak for instance, looks large on a bare hilltop. The farmers, whom the storm has delayed, are busily plowing and overhauling their manure. Observed the ants at work on a large ant-heap. They plainly begin as soon as the snow is off and the ground thawed. Gold-thread, an evergreen, still bright in the swamps. The rattlesnake-plantain has fresh leaves. A wall running over the top of a rocky hill, with the light seen through its chinks, has a pretty effect. The sparrows, frogs, rabbits, etc., are made to resemble the ground for their protection; but so is the hawk that preys on them; but he is of a lighter color beneath, that creeping things over which he hovers may confound him with the sky. The marsh hawk is not easily distinguished from the meadow or the stems of the maples. The water is still over the causeway on both sides of Carlisle Bridge for a long distance. It is a straight flood now for about four miles. Fortunately for the bridge the wind has not been very high since the flood was at its height. The leaves of the hardhack, curled up, show their white under sides. On the bridle-road observed the interesting light-crim-

son star-like flowers of the hazel, the catkins being now more yellowish. This is a singular and interesting part of Concord, extensive and rather flat rocky pastures without houses or cultivated fields on any but this unused bridle-road, from which I hear the frogs peep. These are Channing's "moors." He went in on this road to chop, and this is the scene of his "Woodman."

Heard again (*in the village*) that *vetter-vetter-vetter-vetter-vet'*, or *tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi'* very rapidly repeated, which I heard April 23d,[1] and perhaps the same that I saw April 17th (described April 18th).[2] I am pretty sure it is the pine warbler, yellow beneath, with faint olivaceous marks on the sides, olivaceous above, tail forked, about the size of a yellow-bird.

I have not seen the fox-colored sparrow for some weeks. Thought I saw a loon on Walden yesterday.

April 25. It is related that Giorgio Barbarelli, Titian's friend, defending painting against the charge of being an incomplete art because it could exhibit but one side of a picture, laid a wager with some sculptor that he could represent the back, face, and both profiles of a man, without the spectator being obliged to walk round it as a statue. He painted "a warrior, who, having his back turned towards the spectator, stood looking at himself in a fountain, in whose limpid waters his full front figure was reflected. At the left

[1] [See p. 458.]

[2] [See p. 433, where the bird described would seem to be a yellow palm, or yellow redpoll, warbler.]

of the warrior was suspended his suit of polished steel armor, in which was mirrored, with exact fidelity, the whole of his left side. At the right was painted a looking-glass, which reflected that side;" and thus he won the wager. So I would fain represent some truths as roundly and solidly as a statue, or as completely and in all their relations as Barbarelli his warrior, — so that you may see round them.

1.30 P. M. — Up railroad, returning through Acton *via* powder-mills and Second Division.

The frogs peep at midday. The bees are on the pistillate flowers of the early willows, — the honey-bee, a smaller, fly-like bee with very transparent wings and bright-yellow marks on the abdomen, and also a still smaller bee, more like the honey-bee. They all hum like summer. The water in the meadow beyond J. Hosmer's is still and transparent, and I hear the more stertorous sound or croak of frogs from it, such as you associate with sunny, warmer, calm, placid spring weather. The tortoises are out sunning. The painted tortoise on a tussock. A spotted tortoise on the railroad *hisses* when I touch it with my foot and draws its [head] in. What is that bird on the willows, size of a vireo, yellow below, with darker lines, chestnut crown, whitish (?) line over eye, two white feathers in tail, yellow-olive back, darker tail? [1] Yarrow is started. Saw the first kingfisher, and heard his most unmusical note. That warmer, placid pool and stertorous sound of frogs must not be forgotten, — beneath the railroad causeway. The bees hum on the early willows that

[1] It must have been the yellow redpoll warbler (*Sylvia petechia*).

grow in the sand. They appear to have nearly stripped the sterile flowers of their pollen, and each has its little yellow parcel. The year is stretching itself, is waking up.

If a small oak on a bare hilltop looks large, a large one looks small. That one by Derby's stand, two rods off, looks no bigger than a corpulent man; go close up to it, and it dwarfs an ox, it is as broad as a cart or a wood-shed door. That is a handsome elm by Derby's Bridge, with nine branches springing from near the ground. Near the factory, a willow with small reddish catkins just beginning to expand looks like a peach tree with its blossom-buds.

Found in the midst of the woods in Acton, on the Concord line, a small shanty or shed, whitewashed, which I mistook at first, through the trees, for a white marble tomb with a slight clearing about it. Is it a bowling-alley? Is it a pigeon-place? What means this sign on the tree, "O. B. Trask"? that rocking-chair under a pine? Went through a kind of gate into a little green patch which had been *spaded* up the previous year, about a quarter of an acre cleared, and winter rye coming up on a part of it. The shed was locked; no trace of a recent inhabitant or visitor; window a bit of glass no bigger than your hand, flat against a joist; sign on the roof, "Any pirson who shall Burn or distroy this bilding is liable to 15 years imprisonment;" one or two herbs, catnip or balm, about the door, protected with sticks; a sunken barrel to catch the drip of the eaves; the stones picked up and thrown into heaps; a kind of small truck; another sign, "O. B. Trask T. line," cut on a board and nailed to a pine.

It makes a sad impression, like a poorhouse or hospital. Is he insane or of sound, serene mind? Is he weak, or is he strong? If I knew that the occupant was a cheerful, strong, serene man, how rejoiced I should be to see his shanty!

That steep hill west of the Concord line, from which the autumnal view is got, is covered on the top with that short moss now in fruit. The filaments, seen singly and close to, are of a varnished-mahogany color, but seen in dense masses, as you approach the summit in the ascent, with the sunlight on them, they are a light crimson surmounted with the whitish capsules. It has a very rich effect like a sort of crimson mould or mildew, flower-like. The bare top of the hill is covered with sere tufts of fine grass, this crimson moss, that reddish frosted (?) saxifrage (?) in patches, and with cladonias, with much bare pebbly earth.

In the rear of the Major Heywood house, lay on the sere grass in a long pasture bounded by a pitch pine wood and heard the robin sing. What different tints of blue in the same sky! It requires to be parted by white clouds that the delicacy and depth of each part may appear. Beyond a narrow wisp or feather of mist, how different the sky! Sometimes it is full of light, especially toward the horizon. The sky is never seen to be of so deep and delicate a blue as when it is seen between downy clouds.

The mayflower is well budded and ready to blossom, but not yet out; nor the andromeda, nor saxifrage, nor violet, that I can find. I am surprised to find the cowslip in full bloom at Second Division Meadow,

numerous flowers. Growing in the water, it is not, comparatively, so backward this year perhaps. Its heart or kidney shaped, crenate green leaves, which had not freshly grown when I was here before, have suddenly pushed up. The snows soon melted on this meadow. The horse-tail [1] too is in flower.[2] And what is that low, regular, red-leaved and red-rooted plant in the meadow with the cowslip? [3] Yet we walk over snow and ice a long distance in the road here. I hear the first wood thrush singing faintly and at a distance. The hills are yet the color of a Roxbury russet, *i. e.* a russet without the red. Heard from a chickadee a note like one of the notes of a brown thrasher. Saw a dandelion in blossom at Jenny's in the water. Water over the road still, beyond J. P. Brown's, toward C. Miles.

We have reached the Clamshell Hill. The setting sun, which we do not see behind Loring's wood, which we have not seen for an hour or two behind dark dull clouds in the west, is falling bright and warm at last on the eastern hills and woods, and the windows of the village, which are as bright as itself. It is best to see it thus from the shade. Now the sun is set, and we have turned the point of Loring's wood and see a long, low gilded cloud just above the horizon, so low that the fluctuating, seething (?) over the fields produces a tremulous motion which the beholder refers to the gilded edge of that far-distant cloud. I do not remember to have seen this watery trembling in the horizon before.

[1] Field (?) [horse-tail].

[2] Sheds its pollen in the house the 27th, abundant and pea-green.

[3] Meadow saxifrage.

April 26. Chickweed (*Stellaria media*), naturalized, shows its humble star-like white flowers now on rather dirty weather-worn branches in low, damp gardens. Also the smaller white flowers of the shepherd's-purse, which is already six or eight inches high, in the same places, *i. e.* Cheney's garden. Both, according to Dewey, introduced and naturalized.

What they call April weather, threatening rain notwithstanding the late long-continued rains.

P. M. — Rambled amid the shrub oak hills beyond Hayden's.

Lay on the dead grass in a cup-like hollow sprinkled with half-dead low shrub oaks. As I lie flat, looking close in among the roots of the grass, I perceive that its endless ribbon has pushed up about one inch and is green to that extent, — such is the length to which the spring has gone here, — though when you stand up the green is not perceptible. It is a dull, rain dropping and threatening afternoon, inclining to drowsiness. I feel as if I could go to sleep under a hedge. The landscape wears a subdued tone, quite soothing to the feelings; no glaring colors. I begin now to leave off my greatcoat.

The frogs at a distance are now so numerous that, instead of the distinct shrill peeps, it is one dreamy sound. It is not easy to tell where or how far off they are. When you have reached their pool, they seem to recede as you advance. As you squat by the side of the pool, you still see no motion in the water, though your ears ring with the sound, seemingly and probably within three feet. I sat for ten minutes on the watch,

waving my hand over the water that they might betray themselves, a tortoise, with his head out, a few feet off, watching me all the while, till at last I caught sight of a frog under a leaf, and caught and pocketed him; but when I looked afterward, he had escaped. The moment the dog stepped into the water they stopped. They are very shy. Hundreds filled the air with their shrill peep. Yet two or three could be distinguished by some peculiarity or variation in their note. Are these different?

The *Viola ovata* budded. Saw pollywogs two or three inches long.

April 27. Heard the field or rush sparrow this morning (*Fringilla juncorum*), George Minott's "huckleberry-bird." It sits on a birch and sings at short intervals, apparently answered from a distance. It is clear and sonorous heard afar; but I found it quite impossible to tell from which side it came; sounding like *phe, phe, phe, pher-pher-tw-tw-tw-t-t-t-t,* — the first three slow and loud, the next two syllables quicker, and the last part quicker and quicker, becoming a clear, sonorous trill or rattle, like a spoon in a saucer. Heard also a chipping sparrow (*F. socialis*).

It has rained a little in the night. The landscape is still dark and wet. The hills look very dank, but I notice that some houses, one yellow one especially, look much better in this light.

The aments of the balm-of-Gilead are just beginning to appear (are they the male or female?),[1] with the

[1] [This is altered in pencil to read, "they are female."]

large leaf-bud in the centre. The leaves in the last are larger and more developed than those of any tree which I have noticed this season. The bud is filled with "a fragrant, viscid balsam," which is yellowish and difficult to wash from the fingers. It is an agreeable fragrance at this season. A nearer approach to leaves than in any tree?

Is that a golden willow by the stone bridge, with bright-yellow twigs (the most westerly on the south) and reddish-tipped catkins, five eighths of an inch long, just appearing before leaves (male or female?)?

The balsam of the balm-of-Gilead buds appears to protect the early expanding leaves from the wet.

Should I not have mentioned the butcher-bird, the downy woodpecker or sapsucker, and the white-breasted nuthatch among the winter birds? Also the quail and partridge, etc.

2.30 P. M. — To Conantum *via* railroad bridge.

The Corner road still impassable to foot-travellers. Water eighteen or twenty inches deep; must have been two feet deeper. Observed the spotted tortoise in the water of the meadow on J. Hosmer's land, by riverside. Bright-yellow spots on both shell and head, yet not regularly disposed, but as if, when they were finished in other respects, the maker had sprinkled them with a brush. This fact, that the yellow spots are common to the shell and the head, affected me considerably, as evincing the action of an artist from without; spotted with reference to my eyes. One, I suppose the male, was larger than the other, with a depressed and lighter-colored sternum.

That smallest willow, sage-like, and another, reddish osier-like, are just beginning to show their catkins in rather dry places. I see another similar to last, with female catkins already in bloom; also another, low and yellowish, with half-inch elliptical catkins showing red anthers within the down. *Bœomyces roseus* does not show in dry weather. The *Viola pedata* is advancing. What is that weed the under side of whose radical leaves is now a claret-color, by a sandy path-side?[1] At the spring by the Corner road, the grass is now of [what] I must call a fiery green. It is an eye-salve, a collyrium, to behold it. Here, where the snow cannot lie long on the ground, vegetation has made great progress. The common angelica is a foot high, the skunk-cabbage leaves five inches broad, the wood anemone is budded, and a thimble-berry or rose leaved out; and several smaller green weeds there are. It is not only warmer for the water, but it is sheltered from the wind. Saw what I take to be the barn swallow. Some of the mosses bear now a green fruit.

On Conantum Cliffs, whose seams dip to the northwest at an angle of 50° (?) and run northeast and southwest, I find to-day for the first time the early saxifrage (*Saxifraga vernalis*) in blossom, growing high and dry in the narrow seams, where there is no soil for it but a little green moss. Following thus early after the bare rock, it is one of the first flowers, not only in the spring of the year, but in the spring of the world. It can take advantage of a perpendicular cliff where

[1] *Aster undulatus?*

the snow cannot lie and fronting the south. In exactly the same places grows the columbine, now well budded and seven or eight inches high. The higher up the rock and the more sheltered and sunny the location, the earlier they are. Also the first plantain-leaved everlasting (Gray's *Antennaria plantaginifolia*) is in blossom in a sheltered place in the grass at the top of the rock. The thimble-berry and the sweet-briar are partly leaved out in the crevices of the rock, and the latter emits its fragrance. The half-open buds of the saxifrage, showing the white of the petals in a corymb or cyme, on a short stem, surrounded by its new leaves mingled with the purplish tips of the calyx-leaves, is handsomer than when it is fully expanded. This is a place to look for early blossoms of the saxifrage, columbine, and plantain-leaved everlasting, — the first two especially. The crevices of the rock (cliff) make natural hothouses for them, affording dryness, warmth, and shelter.

It is astonishing how soon and unexpectedly flowers appear, when the fields are scarcely tinged with green. Yesterday, for instance, you observed only the radical leaves of some plants; to-day you pluck a flower.

See the first downy woodpecker, or sapsucker, tapping an elm. He taps very rapidly, then turns his head as if listening to hear the worm; plainly is not now making a hole. Do we see him in the winter? What is that alarmed, loud, short, whistling note that I hear? A woodpecker?

Found the first *Gnaphalium purpureum*, purplish cudweed, on Conantum by the edge of a rock. Its humble, woolly, purplish-white flower, close to the ground amid

its greenish leaves, downy and white on the under side, is the more interesting for appearing at this time, especially if it is seen with the dew on it, though it

bears transportation. A little purplish button, the larger central shoot or bud being surrounded by five others smaller. Its leaves have not three nerves. The hickory buds show a little yellow; the black birch buds and the bass-wood look fresh. There are large clouds and extensive shadows on land and the broad water, and a cheerful bright light on the russet grass (I am still on Conantum), which all together make our landscape appear larger-featured than usual. Gooseberry bushes in the garden have leaved out partly.

April 28. I scarcely know why I am excited when, in M. Huc's book, I read of the country of the Mongol Tartars as the "Land of Grass," but I am, as much as if I were a cow.[1]

2.30 P. M. — To Cliffs and Heywood's Brook.

Are not the flowers which appear earliest in the spring the most primitive and simplest? They have been in this town thus far, as I have observed them this spring, putting them down in the order in which I think they should be named, using Gray's names: —

[1]	*Symplocarpus fœtidus*	(well advanced Feb. 13th, '51)[2]
[2]	*Alnus incana*	April 11
[3]	" *serrulata*	8

[1] Drive about the 10th of May to Ashburnham.

[2] N. B. Spring of '51 ten days or more earlier.

[4]	*Acer rubrum* [1]	April 9	one by Red Bridge
[5]	*Salix*, willow, earliest	12	
[6]	*Ulmus Americana* [2]	15	one, Cheney's (others ten days or fourteen later)
[7]	*Populus tremuloides*	15	
[8]	*Corylus* "	16	perhaps before the last [3]
[9]	*Carex Pennsylvanica* [4]	22	
[10]	*Caltha palustris*	25	many
[11]	*Stellaria media* [5]	26	Cheney's garden
[12]	*Capsella Bursa-pastoris*	26	" "
[13]	*Taraxacum Dens-leonis*	25	one in water (seen by another the 20th)
[14]	*Equisetum arvense*	25	in water
[15]	*Gnaphalium purpureum*	27	(about April 16th, '51)
[16]	*Saxifraga Virginiensis*	27	(April 22d, '51)
[17]	*Antennaria plantaginifolia*	27	
[18]	*Ranunculus fascicularis*	28	only two (abundant April 22d, '51)

All but the 3d, 8th, 11th, 12th observed in the very best season, and these within a day (?) of their flowering.[6]

I observe that the first six are decidedly water or water-loving plants, and the 10th, 13th, and 14th were found in the water and are equally if not more confined to that element. The 7th and 8th belong to the cooler zones of the earth, the 7th, according to Emerson, as far north as 64° and comes up (is it this?) on burnt lands first and will grow in dry, cool, dreary places. The 9th on a dry, warm rocky hillside, — the earliest (?) grass to blossom,— also the 18th; the 11th and 12th in cold, damp gardens, like the earth first

[1] [*Rubrum* crossed out in pencil and *dasycarpum* substituted.]
[2] [Queried in pencil.]
[3] *Corylus rostrata* when?
[4] [Queried in pencil.]
[5] [Queried in pencil.]
[6] N. B. Is the *Hepatica triloba* found here?

made dry land; the 15th and 17th on dry (scantily clad with grass) fields and hills, hardy; the 16th, sunny bare rocks, in seams on moss, where also in a day or two the columbine will bloom. The 18th is also indebted to the warmth of the rocks.

This may, perhaps, be nearly the order of the world's creation. Thus we have in the spring of the year the spring of the world represented. — Such were the first localities afforded for plants,— water-bottoms, bare rocks, and scantily clad lands, and land recently bared of water.

The spotted tortoise is spotted on shell, head, tail, and legs. Fresh leaves of a neottia pale and not distinctly veined. Red Solomon's-seal berries on their short stems prostrate on the dead leaves, some of them plump still. One man has turned his cows out to pasture. Have not seen the slate-colored snowbird for a few days. I am getting my greatcoat off, but it is a cold and wintry day, with snow-clouds appearing to draw water, but cold water, surely, or out of the north side of the well; a few flakes in the air; drawing snow as well as water. From Fair Haven the landscape all in shadow, apparently to the base of the mountains, but the Peterboro hills are in sunshine and unexpectedly are white with snow (no snow here, unless in some hollows in the woods), reflecting the sun, more obvious for the sunshine. I never saw them appear so near. It is startling thus to look into winter.

How suddenly the flowers bloom! Two or three days ago I could not, or did not, find the leaves of the crowfoot. To-day, not knowing it well, I looked in vain, till

at length, in the very warmest nook in the grass above the rocks of the Cliff, I found two bright-yellow blossoms, which betrayed the inconspicuous leaves and all. The spring flowers wait not to perfect their leaves before they expand their blossoms. The blossom in so many cases precedes the leaf; so with poetry? They flash out. In the most favorable locality you will find flowers earlier than the May goers will believe. This year, at least, one flower (of several) hardly precedes another, but as soon as the storms were over and pleasant weather came, all blossomed at once, having been retarded so long. This *appears* to be particularly true of the herbaceous flowers. How much does this happen every year?

There is no important change in the color of the woods yet. There are fewer dry leaves; buds color the maples; and, perhaps, the bark on some last year's shoots, as the willows, is brighter; and some willows, covered with catkins, and even alders, maples, elms, and poplars show at a distance. The earth has now a greenish tinge, and the ice, of course, has universally given place to water for a long time past. These are general aspects. The *Veratrum viride* at Well Meadow is fifteen or sixteen inches high, the most of a growth this year. The angelica (?) at the Corner Spring is pretty near it.

I suppose the geese are all gone. And the ducks? Did the snowbirds go off with the pleasant weather?

Standing above the first little pond east of Fair Haven, this bright reflecting water surface is seen plainly at a higher level than the distant pond. It has a singu-

lar but pleasant effect on the beholder to see considerable sheets of water standing at different levels. Pleasant to see lakes like platters full of water. Found a large cockle(?)-shell by the shore of this little pond. It reminds me that all the earth is seashore, — the sight of these little shells inland. It is a beach I stand on. Is the male willow on the east end of this pondlet — catkins about three quarters of an inch long and just bursting, commonly on the side and always before any leaves — the brittle gray willow (*Salix grisea*)? That small, flat, downy gnaphalium in sandy paths, — is it the fragrant life-everlasting? The andromeda requires the sun. It is now merely a dull reddish brown with light (grayish?) from the upper surface of the leaves. Frog-spawn a mass of transparent jelly bigger than the two fists, composed of contiguous globules or eyes, with each a little squirming pollywog (?) in the centre, a third of an inch long.

Walden is yellowish (apparently) next the shore, where you see the sand, then green in still shallow water, then, or generally, deep-blue.[1] This as well under the railroad, and now that the trees have not leaved out, as under pines.[2]

That last long storm brought down a coarse, elephantine sand foliage in the Cut. Slumbrous ornaments for a cave or subterranean temple, such as at Elephantium? I see no willow leaves yet. A maple by Heywood's meadow has opened its sterile blossoms.

[1] [A pencilled interrogation-point in parentheses follows the word "blue."]

[2] [*Walden*, p. 196; Riv. 276.]

Why is this (and maples generally) so much later than the Red Bridge one? [1]

A week or more ago I made this list of early willows in Massachusetts, according to Gray, putting Emerson in brackets: —

Salix tristis (sage willow).
S. humilis (low bush willow); *S. Muhlenbergiana; S. conifera.*
S. discolor (glaucous willow); [two-colored willow, bog willow]; *S. sensitiva.*
S. eriocephala (silky-headed willow); *S. prinoides* (?); *S. crassa;* "closely resembles the last," *i. e. S. discolor;* [woolly-headed swamp].
S. sericea (silky-leaved willow); *S. grisea;* [brittle gray].

April 29. Observed a fire yesterday on the railroad, — Emerson's Island that was. The leaves are dry enough to burn; and I see a smoke this afternoon in the west horizon. There is a slight haziness on the woods, as I go to Mayflower Road at 2.30 P. M., which advances me further into summer. Is that the arrowhead, so forward with its buds, in the Nut Meadow ditch? The ground is dry. I smell the dryness of the woods. Their shadows look more inviting, and I am reminded of the hum of bees. The pines have an appearance which they have not worn before, yet not easy to describe. The mottled light (sunlight) and shade, seen looking into the woods, is more like summer. But the season is most forward at the Second Division Brook, where the cowslip is in blossom, —

[1] [The Red Bridge one (see vol. iv of the *Journal*, p. 6, and list, p. 475 *ante*) was a white maple, which species regularly blooms earlier than the red.]

and nothing yet planted at home, — these bright-yellow *suns* of the meadow, in rich clusters, their flowers contrasting with the green leaves, from amidst the all-producing, dark-bottomed water. A flower-fire bursting up, as if through crevices in the meadow. They are very rich, seen in the meadow where they grow, and the most conspicuous flower at present, but held in the hand they are rather coarse. But their yellow and green are really rich, and in the meadow they are the most delicate objects. Their bright yellow is something incredible when first beheld. There is still considerable snow in the woods, where it has not melted since winter. Here is a small reddish-topped rush (is it the *Juncus effusus*, common or soft rush?[1]), now a foot high, in the meadow with the cowslips. It is the greatest growth of the grass form I have seen. The butterflies are now more numerous, red and blue-black or dark velvety. The art of life, of a poet's life, is, not having anything to do, to do something. People are going to see Kossuth, but the same man does not attract me and George Loring. If he could come openly to Boston without the knowledge of Boston, it might be worth my while to go and see him.

The mayflower on the point of blossoming. I think I may say that it will blossom to-morrow. The blossoms of this plant are remarkably concealed beneath the leaves, perhaps for protection. It is singularly unpretending, not seeking to exhibit or display its simple beauty. It is the most delicate flower, both to eye and to scent, as yet. Its weather-worn leaves do not adorn

[1] No.

it. If it had fresh spring leaves it would be more famous and sought after. Observed two thrushes arrived which I do not know. I discover a hawk over my head by his shadow on the ground; also small birds. The acorns among the leaves have been sprouted for a week past, the shells open and the blushing (red) meat exposed at the sprout end, where the sprout is already turning toward the bowels of the earth, already thinking of the tempests which it is destined as an oak to withstand, if it escapes worm and squirrel. Pick these up and plant them, if you would make a forest.

Old Mr. Francis Wheeler thinks the river has not risen so high as recently for sixty-three years; that was in June!! that it was then higher. Noah Wheeler never saw it so high as lately. I think it doubtful if it was higher in 1817.

F. Wheeler, Jr., saw dandelions in bloom the 20th of April. Garfield's folks used them for greens. They grew in a springy place behind Brigham's in the Corner.

The *Fringilla hyemalis* still here, though apparently not so numerous as before. The *Populus grandidentata* in blossom, the sterile (?) flowers, though I cannot count, at most, more than five or six stamens. I observe the light-green leaves of a pyrola (?) standing high on the stem in the woods, with the last year's fruit; the "one-sided" or else the "oval-leaved," I think.

As I come home over the Corner road, the sun, now getting low, is reflected very bright and silvery from the water on the meadows, seen through the pines of Hubbard's Grove. The causeway will be passable on foot to-morrow.

April 30. 2 P. M. — Down the Boston road and across to Turnpike, etc., etc.

The elms are now generally in blossom and Cheney's elm still also. The last has leaf-buds which show the white. Now, before any leaves have appeared, their blossoms clothe the trees with a rich, warm brown color, which serves partially for foliage to the street-walker, and makes the tree more obvious. Held in the hand, the blossoms of some of the elms are quite rich and variegated, now purple and yellowish specked with the dark anthers and two light styles. I know not why some should be so much earlier than others. It is a beautiful day, — a mild air, — and all farmers and gardeners out and at work. Now is the time to set trees and consider what things you will plant in your garden. Yesterday I observed many fields newly plowed, the yellow soil looking very warm and dry in the sun; and one boy had fixed his handkerchief on a stick and elevated it on the yoke, where it flapped or streamed and rippled gayly in the wind, as he drove his oxen dragging a harrow over the plowed field. I see now what I should call a small-sized bullfrog in the brook in front of Alcott's house that was. The sweet-gale is in blossom. Its rich reddish-brown buds have expanded into yellowish and brown blossoms, all male blossoms that I see. Those handsome buds that I have observed are the male blossom buds then. This has undoubtedly been in bloom a day or two in some places. I saw yesterday a large-sized water-bug; to-day many in the brook; yesterday a trout; to-day shiners, I think. The huckleberry-bird sings. When I look

hence to the hills on the Boston road under which the inhabitants are beginning to plant in their gardens, the air is so fine and peculiar that I seem to see the hills and woods through a mirage. I am doubtful about their distance and exact form and elevation. The sound of a spade, too, sounds musical on the spring air. (To-night for the first time I sit without a fire.) One plower in a red flannel shirt, who looks picturesquely under the hill, suggests that our dress is not commonly of such colors as to adorn the landscape. (To-night and last night the spearer's light is seen on the meadows; he has been delayed by the height of the water.) I like very well to walk here on the low ground on the meadow; to see the churches and houses in the horizon against the sky and the now very blue Mt. Wachusett seeming to rise from amid them. When you get still further off on the lowest ground, you see distant barns and houses against the horizon, and the mountain appears to preside over this vale alone, which the adjacent hills on right and left fence in.

The season advances by fits and starts; you would not believe that there could be so many degrees to it. If you have had foul and cold weather, still some advance has been made, as you find when the fair weather comes, — new *lieferungs* of warmth and summeriness, which make yesterday seem far off and the dog-days or midsummer incredibly nearer. Yesterday I would not have believed that there could have been such an improvement on that day as this is, short of midsummer or June.

My pocket being full of the flowers of the maple,

elm, etc., my handkerchief by its fragrance reminded me of some fruitful or flowery bank, I know not where.

A pleasant little green knoll north of the Turnpike near the Lincoln line. I thought that the greenness of the sward there on the highest ground was occasioned by the decay of the roots of two oaks, whose old stumps still remained. The greenness covered a circle about two rods in diameter. It was too late to feel the influence of the drip of the trees. We have had no such summer heat this year (unless when I was burned in the Deep Cut), yet there is an agreeable balmy wind. I see here, while looking for the first violet, those little heaps made by the mole cricket (?), or by worms (?). I observe to-day the bright-crimson (?) perfect flowers of the maple, — crimson styles, sepals, and petals (crimson or scarlet?), — whose leaves are not yet very handsome in the rain as you look to the sky; and the hum of small bees from them. So much color have they.

Crossing the Turnpike, we entered Smith's highlands. Dodging behind a swell of land to avoid the men who were plowing, I saw unexpectedly (when I looked to see if we were concealed by the field) the blue mountains' line in the west (the whole intermediate earth and towns being concealed), this greenish field for a foreground sloping upward a few rods, and then those grand mountains seen over it in the background, so blue, — seashore, earth-shore, — and, warm as it is, covered with snow which reflected the sun. Then when I turned, I saw in the east, just over the woods, the modest, pale, cloud-like moon, two-

thirds full, looking spirit-like on these daylight scenes. Such a sight excites me. The earth is worthy to inhabit. The far river-reach from this hill. It is not so placid a blue — as if with a film of azure over it — to-day, however. The more remote the water, the lighter the blue, perchance. It is like a lake in Tartary; there our camels will find water. Here is a rock made to sit on, — large and inviting, which you do not fear to crush. I hear the flicker and the huckleberry-bird. Yet no leaves apparent. This in some measure corresponds to the fine afternoon weather after the leaves have fallen, though there is a different kind of promise now than then. We are now going out into the field to work; then we were going into the house to think. I love to see alders and dogwood instead of peach trees. May we not see the melted snow lapsing over the rocks on the mountains in the sun, as well as snow? The white surfaces appear declivitous. While we sit here, I hear for the first time the flies buzz so dronishly in the air. I see travellers like mere dark objects in the yellow road afar, — the Turnpike. Hosmer's house and cottage under its elms and on the summit of green smooth slopes looks like a terrestrial paradise, the abode of peace and domestic happiness. Far over the woods westward, a shining vane, glimmering in the sun.

At Saw Mill Run the swamp (?) gooseberry (is it?) is partly leaved out.[1] This, being in the shade of the woods, and not, like the thimble-berry, in a warm and sunny place, methinks is the earliest shrub or tree that

[1] I think it is Gray's *Ribes hirtellum*, short-stalked wild gooseberry.

shows leaves.[1] The neatly and closely folded, plaited, leaves of the hellebore are rather handsome objects now. As you pull them apart, they emit a slight marshy scent, somewhat like the skunk-cabbage. They are tender and dewy within, folded fan-like.

I hear a wood thrush here, with a fine metallic ring to his note. This sound most adequately expresses the immortal beauty and wildness of the woods. I go in search of him. He sounds no nearer. On a low bough of a small maple near the brook in the swamp, he sits with ruffled feathers, singing more low or with less power, as it were ventriloquizing; for though I am scarcely more than a rod off, he seems further off than ever.

Caught three little peeping frogs. When I approached, and my shadow fell on the water, I heard a peculiarly trilled and more rapidly vibrated note, somewhat, in kind, like that which a hen makes to warn her chickens when a hawk goes over, and most stopped peeping; another trill, and all stopped. It seemed to be a note of alarm. I caught one. It proved to be two coupled. They remained together in my hand. This sound has connection with their loves probably. (I hear a trilled sound from a frog this evening. It is my dreaming midsummer frog, and he seems to be toward the depot.) I find them generally sitting on the dead leaves near the water's edge, from which they leap into the water.

On the hill behind Hosmer's, half an hour before

[1] The Missouri currant in gardens is equally forward; the cultivated gooseberry nearly so; the lilac not so.

sunset. — The hill on the Boston road is very handsome with its regular promontories, and the smokes now seen against it rising from the chimneys, what time the laborer takes his tea. The robins sing powerfully on the elms; the little frogs peep; the woodpecker's harsh and long-continued cry is heard from the woods; the huckleberry-bird's simple, sonorous trill. The plowed land shines where a drag has passed over it. It is a pleasant place for a house, because you overlook the road, and the near land seems to run into the meadow.

Saw male willow catkins in Tuttle's lane, now just out of bloom, about two inches long. The flower of some of the earliest elms is by no means to be despised at this season. It is conspicuous and rich in any nosegay that can now be made. The female plants of the sweet-gale are rare (?) here. The scales of the male catkins are "set with amber-colored resinous dots" (Emerson).

END OF VOLUME III

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